THE
ŚIVA-PURĀṆA

PART II

MOTILAL BANARSIDASS PUBLISHERS
PRIVATE LIMITED • DELHI

CONTENTS

RUDRASAṀHITĀ
KUMĀRAKHAṆḌA SECTION IV

RUDRASAṀHITĀ : YUDDHAKHAṆḌA SECTION V

PĀRVATĪKHAṆḌA

SECTION III

CHAPTER ONE

(The marriage of Himācala[1])

Nārada said :—

1. O Brahmā, how did the goddess Satī, the daughter of Dakṣa who forsook her body in her father's sacrifice, become the daughter of Himācala, and the mother of the universe ?

2. How could she secure Śiva as her husband after performing a severe penance ? Please explain this clearly to me who ask you about it.

Brahmā said :—

3. O foremost of sages, listen to the story of Śivā which is excellent, sanctifying, highly divine, auspicious and destructive of all sins.

4-5. When the great goddess Satī, the daughter of Dakṣa, was sporting about on the Himālayas with Śiva, Menā,[2] the beloved of Himācala thought that she was her own daughter and loved her like a mother with all kinds of nourishments.

6-7. When the great Goddess Satī, the daughter of Dakṣa who had been to her father's sacrifice and who did not receive his due attention became angry and cast off her body, at the very same time, O sage, Himācala's beloved Menā wanted to propitiate her in Śivaloka.

1. Himavat or Himācala is represented in two forms (1) the mobile and (2) immobile. The former is the subtle human form while the latter is the gross, stationary form identical with the mountain Himālayas

The present section recounts the marriage of Himavat with Menā in his mobile form. See RS III 1.15.

2. Menā or Menakā, the wife of Himavat and the mother of Pārvatī, was one of the three daughters of Svadhā, the wife of Kavi, a class of Pitṛs. Svadhā was one of the sixty daughters of Dakṣa and Prasūti who gave birth to Menā, Dhanyā and Kalāvatī.

8. Satī thought to herself :—"I shall be her daughter" and cast off her body in order to become the daughter of Himācala.

9. At the proper time Satī who had cast off her body and who was worshipped and eulogised by the gods became the daughter of Menā out of sheer joy.

10. On being advised by Nārada, the goddess who was named Pārvatī, performed a severe penance and thereby secured Śiva as her husband.

Nārada said :—

11. O Brahmā, of great intellect and foremost of eloquent gods, please tell me the origin and details of the marriage of Menā.

12. Blessed indeed is the gentle lady Menakā of whom Satī was born as a daughter. Hence that chaste lady is worthy of the honour and blessings of everyone.

Brahmā said :—

13. O sage Nārada, you listen to the story of the origin of Pārvatī's mother and her marriage and other details both sanctifying and conducive to the growth of devotion.

14. O excellent sage, there in the northern region is a mountain called Himavat who is the lord of mountains and has great splendour and prosperity.

15. His twofold aspects—that of a mobile nature and that of the immobile one—are well known. I succinctly describe his subtle form.

16. He is beautiful and is the storehouse of multifarious gems. Extending from the eastern to the western ocean he appears like a measuring rod of the Earth.[3]

17. He abounds in various trees. Being of variegated shape and features he is adorned by many peaks on him. Lions, tigers and other animals frequent it. Many happy persons live there for ever.

18. He is the storehouse of snow (and yet) very fierce. He is the resort of wonderful things. He is resorted to by

3. For the similarity of ideas and verbal expression, compare Kālidāsa's Kumārasambhava I. 1.

the gods, sages and seers. He is a great favourite of Śiva.

19. He is of pure soul, an abode of austerities. He sanctifies even the great souls. He is the bestower of the benefit of austerities. He is the auspicious storehouse of multifarious minerals.

20. He is of a divine form. He is beautiful in every part. He is the unaffected part of Viṣṇu. He is the king of leading mountains and a great favourite of the good.

21. Due to the desire for the benefit of the manes and the gods and for the stabilisation of his race as well as for the increase of virtue, Himācala wanted to marry.

22. At that time, considering their own interest entirely, O excellent sage, the gods approached the celestial forefathers and said lovingly to them.

The gods said :—

23. "O ye forefathers, listen to our words with pleasure. If you desire that the affairs of the gods be fulfilled you must act accordingly soon.

24-25. Uniting your eldest daughter Menā of auspicious features with Himācala, a great benefit will accrue to everyone. At every step, the miseries of the gods and those of yours as well can be reduced".

Brahmā said :—

26. On hearing these words of the gods, pondering over them and remembering the curse incurred by their daughters, the forefathers said "Amen" to their proposals.

27. They gave their daughter Menā to Himavat. In that auspicious marriage there were great festivities.

28. Viṣṇu, the other gods and the sages reached there with their hearts set on Śiva.

29. Giving many charitable gifts they made the celebration a great success. They praised the celestial forefathers and the Himavat.

30. All the gods and the sages rejoiced and returned to their own abodes with their hearts set on Śiva.

31. After receiving many articles as gifts and

marrying the beloved lady Menā, the lord of mountains returned to his abode and rejoiced.

Brahmā said :—

32. O excellent sage, the pleasing details of the splendid marriage of Himavat with Menā have been recounted to you thus. What more do you wish to hear?

CHAPTER TWO

(*Menā and others incur the imprecation of Sanaka etc.*)

Nārada said :—

1. O Brahmā, the intelligent one, please now tell me reverently about the origin of Menā as well as the imprecation. Please clear my doubts.

Brahmā said :—

2. O Nārada and the sages, listen to the narrative of the origin of Menā. O excellent son, O great scholar, I shall mention it now.

3. O sage, I have already told you about my son Dakṣa. He had sixty daughters all of whom were the instruments of creation.

4. He celebrated their marriages with Kaśyapa and other bridegrooms. You know all that already. O Nārada, now, listen to the present story.

5. Among those, the daughter Svadhā was given to the forefathers. She had three daughters all of whom were of handsome features and virtuous forms.

6. O excellent sage, listen to their holy names which remove obstacles and confer blessings.

7. Menā was the eldest. Dhanyā was the middle. Kalāvatī was the youngest. All these were mentally conceived daughters of the forefathers.

8. They were not born of the womb of Svadhā. They were conventionally considered her children. On reciting their names, men can achieve their desires.

9. The mothers of the worlds are worthy of reverence of the entire universe always. They are the bestowers of great joy. They are great yoginīs, storehouses of knowledge. They pervade the three worlds.

10. O excellent sage, once the three sisters went to Śvetadvīpa (white island)[4] in the world of Viṣṇu for sight-seeing purpose.

11. After bowing to and eulogising Viṣṇu with great devotion they halted there at his bidding. A great concourse of people was held there.

12. O sage, at the same time, Siddhas, sons of Brahmā—Sanaka and others came there. They bowed to and lauded Viṣṇu and stayed there at his bidding.

13. On seeing those sages Sanaka and others and the persons who had assembled there, stood up. When they, the elders of gods respected by the people, sat they all bowed to them.

14. Helpless by misfortune and deluded by lord Śiva's illusion O sage, the three sisters did not stand up.

15. Śiva's illusion is weighty and capable of deluding the worlds. The entire universe is subservient to it. It is also called Śiva's Will.

16. The same is also called an action that has begun to fructify. Its names are many. Everything takes place on Śiva's wish. There is nothing to be pondered over in this respect.

17. Becoming a victim thereof, the sisters did not make obeisance to them. They remained surprised and stunned thereaftar seeing them.

18. On seeing such a behaviour on their part the great sages, Sanaka and others, despite being wise, became unbearably furious.

19. Himself deluded by Śiva's illusion Sanaka, a perfect Yogin, furiously told them giving a curse as punishment.

Sanatkumāra said :—

20. Inspite of being the daughters of the forefathers,

4. It has not been possible to identify this island. Colonel Wilford attempted to identify it with Britain. See. H. M. P. 315.

ye three sisters are foolish, bereft of wisdom and ignorant of the essence of the Vedas.

21. You did not stand up nor did you pay any respects to us. You were haughty and deluded and so evinced a deluded disposition of human beings. Hence all of you shall leave heaven.

22. May the three sisters deluded by ignorance be born as human womenfolk. May ye reap this fruit as a result of the power of your own action.

Brahmā said :—

23. On hearing this, the chaste maidens got perplexed. The three fell at his feet and spoke with their heads bent down.

The daughters of the forefathers said :—

24. "O excellent sage, ocean of mercy, be pleased now. Because we were mentally confounded we did not bow to you.

25. O Brahmin, the result thereof has been achieved by us. O great sage it is not your fault. Bless us now whereby we shall regain heavenly abode again."

Brahmā said :—

26. On hearing their words, O dear, the sage spoke to them. He had been induced by Śiva's illusion to give them redemption from the curse. He was a bit consoled.

Sanatkumāra said :—

27. "O ye three daughters of forefathers, listen with pleasure to my words that will dispel your sorrow and bestow happiness on you.

28. May the eldest among you become the wife of Himavat the mountain that is a part of Viṣṇu. Pārvatī shall be her daughter.

29. The second daughter Dhanyā shall be the Yoginī, the wife of Janaka. Her daughter shall be Mahālakṣmī in the name of Sītā.

30. The youngest Kalāvatī shall be the wife of the Vaiśya—Vṛṣabhāna. At the end of Dvāpara, Rādhā shall be

her daughter.

31. The Yoginī Menā shall attain the great region Kailāsa along with her body and in the company of her husband due to the boon of Pārvatī.

32. Janaka shall be blessed by Sītā born in Janaka's race and he shall be a living liberated soul. A great Yogin, he will attain Vaikuṇṭha.

33. Kalāvatī by the virtue of Vṛṣabhāna shall become a living liberated soul and attain Goloka[5] along with her daughter. There is no doubt about it.

34. Without adversity how can one attain greatness? To persons of good rites, if misery vanishes happiness is likely to be difficult of access.

35. Ye the daughters of forefathers shall shine in heaven. By the vision of Viṣṇu your evil actions have been quelled."

36. After saying this, the sage was freed of his fury on thinking of Śiva, the bestower of wisdom, worldly pleasures and salvation.

37. Listen further to my words always pleasing to you. You are all blessed by Śiva's pleasure. Hence you will be worthy of honour and respect immediately.

38. Menā's daughter, goddess Pārvatī, the mother of the universe shall become Śiva's beloved after performing severe penance.

39. Dhanyā's daughter Sītā will become Rāma's wife. Based on worldly conventions she will sport about with Rāma.

40. Kalāvatī's daughter Rādhā, resident of Goloka[6] shall become the wife of Kṛṣṇa united with him in secret love.

Brahmā said

41. After saying this, that holy sage Sanatkumāra vanished there itself along with his brothers after he was eulogised duly.

42. The three sisters, the mentally conceived daughters of the forefathers were freed of their sins and attained happiness. They returned to their residence quickly.

5. Goloka : It is a modern addition to the original series of fourteen lokas. It is identified with Gokula, a pastoral district on the Yamunā about Mathurā where Kṛṣṇa passed his boyhood with the cowherd.

CHAPTER THREE

(*Hymn to Śiva by Viṣṇu and other gods*)

Nārada said:—

1. O Brahmā, the best of eloquent ones, of great wisdom, please tell me. What is the subsequent story of the good auspicious mountain ?

2. You have narrated the wonderful story of the auspicious antecedents of Menā. The details of the marital rites too are heard. Please continue the subsequent narrative.

3. After marrying Menā what did the mountain do afterwards ? How was Pārvatī, the mother of the universe, born of her ?

4. How did she secure Śiva as her husband after performing a severe penance ? Narrate all these things in detail regarding the glory of Śiva.

Brahmā said:—

5. O sage, lovingly listen to the auspicious glory of Śiva on hearing which even a slayer of a brahmin becomes pure and attains all desires.

6. O Nārada, there was great pomp and ceremony in the three worlds when Himācala returned to his abode after marrying Menā.

7. The delighted Himācala too celebrated a great festival. With good intention he worshipped and revered brahmins, kinsmen and others.

8. The contented brahmins returned to their respective abodes after blessing them. The kinsmen and the others also returned.

9. The delighted Himacāla[6] sported with Menā in his cosy abode, Nandana and other parks as well as in several nice places.

10. At that time, O sage, Viṣṇu, the gods and the noble-sould sages approached the mountain.

11. On seeing the gods after their arrival, the noble

6. It is a grove of Indra, lying to the north of Meru.

Himācala bowed to them gladly and honoured them with devotion. He praised his own good fortune.

12. With the head bent down and palms joined in reverence, he eulogised them with great devotion. Himācala's hair stood on end and tears of love fell from his eyes.

13. O sage, after bowing to them, the delighted Himācala spoke thus to Viṣṇu and other gods.

Himācala said:—

14. Today my life has become fruitful. My good penance has become fruitful. Today my knowledge has become fruitful. Today my sacred rites have become fruitful.

15. I have become blessed today. My entire kingdom, my wife and family have become blessed. Everything has become blessed. There is no doubt about it.

16. Wherefore have all of you come in a body ? Lovingly command me, considering me your own servant.

Brahmā said:—

17. On hearing these words of Himācala, Viṣṇu and other gods considered their affair fulfilled and were delighted. They spoke.

Gods said:—

18. "O Himācala of great intellect, please listen to our beneficent words. We shall gladly tell you why we have come.

19. O Himācala, the mother of the universe Umā, who was born as Dakṣa's daughter, became Rudra's wife and sported for a long time on the earth.

20. On being disrespected by her father, Satī remembered her vow, abandoned her body and returned to her own region.

21-22 O Himācala, this story is well known in the world. You too know it. If this takes place it will be an asset to all gods as well as to you. The gods too will be under your control."

Brahmā said:—

23. On hearing these words of Viṣṇu and others the

delighted lord Himācala said—"So be it" and worshipped them with respect.

24. After instructing him in the method to be followed with great devotion they approached Umā, the consort of Śiva.

25. They stationed themselves in a good place and remembered the mother of the universe, and bowing to her repeatedly eulogised her with devotion.

The gods said:—

26. O goddess Umā, mother of the universe, resident of Śivaloka, favourite of Śiva, O great goddess, O Durgā, we bow to you,

27. With great devotion we bow to the illustrious Energy, the holy, the tranquil, the holy nourishment and the one with the forms of Mahat and the Avyakta.

28. We worship you, Śiva the cause of welfare, the pure, the gross, the subtle, the great goal and the one delighted with the inner and good learning.

29. You are faith, fortitude and prosperity. You alone have control over everything; you are the splendour and energy of the sun illuminating your own universe.

30. We bow to her who promotes robustness in all the beings of the universe from Brahmā to a blade of grass in the whole Cosmos.

31. You are Gāyatrī, the mother of the Vedas, Sāvitrī, Sarasvatī, the sustenance of all the universe; you are the triad of the Vedas having Dharma for its form.

32. You are sleep in all living beings; you are hunger, satiety, thirst, splendour, brilliance and contentment. You are the delighter of every one for ever.

33. To those who perform meritorious actions you are the goddess of fortune. To the sinners you are the eldest sister, the deity of Ignominy; you are peace for the universe, and the mother sustaining lives.

34. You are the essential feature of five elements. You are Justice in those who uphold justice. You are endeavour personified.

35. Of the Ṛgveda you are the invocation; of the Yajurveda you are the blending knot of the mantras; of

Sāmaveda you are the song and of the Atharvaṇa Veda you are the measure of time, you are the final goal.

36. She who is the Tāmasika power of all the Gods, she who is visible in the Rājasika quality of the Creator, she who is heard by us as the benefactress and of the form of Śiva is eulogised here.

37. Let us bow to her who is interested in residing on the Vindhya mountains;[7] who is clever in the playful activity of affording protection to Aṣṭāṅga Yoga; who is devoid of cessation and who acts like a raft that enables the crossing of the ocean of worldly existence with its terrible miseries.

38. May she be pleased with us, for keeping up the sustenance of the world, she, who in the form of slumber that is extremely exhilarating to all born in the universe, extends pleasure in the nose, eyes, face, arms, chest and the mind.

Brahmā said:—

39. Thus eulogising the great Goddess Satī, the mother of the universe, all of them stood waiting lovingly desirous of seeing her.

CHAPTER FOUR

(*The Goddess consoles the Gods*)

Brahmā said:—

1. Thus eulogised by the Gods, the Goddess Durgā, the mother of the universe, the destroyer of impassable distress, appeared in front of them.

2. She was seated in a wonderful divine gem-set chariot over which a soft cushion had been spread and which was decorated with tinkling ornaments.

3. She was shining with the brilliance of her limbs that surpassed even the lustre of a crore of suns. She was sur-

7. As Vindhyavāsinī, dweller in the Vindhyas, the Goddess is worshipped at a place where the Vindhyas approach the Ganges, near Mirzapur.

rounded by a halo created by her own lustre. She was of symmetrical splendour.

4. She was the unequalled supreme illusion, the beautiful wife of Sadāśiva. She had all the three qualities and was devoid of attributes[8] also, she had been staying in the region of Śiva.

5. She was the mother of the three deities[9], Caṇḍī, Śivā, the destroyer of the distress of all, the mother of all supreme slumber and the redeemer of all her own people.

6. Śivā was seen by the gods through the power of huge column of brilliance. Again the gods eulogised her in order to have a sight of her.

7. Then Viṣṇu and other gods who were desirous of seeing her saw the mother of the universe there itself after receiving her favour.

8. The dwellers of heaven were extremely pleased, they bowed to her again and again and particularly eulogised her.

The gods said :—

9. O Śivā, O great Goddess, O mother of the universe we gods bow to you, the destroyer of all distress.

10. O Goddess, neither the Vedas nor the sacred texts know you perfectly. Your greatness, O Śivā, is beyond the scope of speech and mind and cannot even be meditated upon.

11. Even the Vedas mention you, trembling with fright, by negating what you are not. What will be the matter in regard to others ?

12. Many devotees know the same after getting your favour through devotion. There is no cause for fear to the devotees who seek refuge in you.

13. O great Goddess listen to our submission which we, your slaves for ever, are going to explain.

8 As the personified energy of the gods Viṣṇu, Brahmā and Rudra, representing the three qualities Sattva, Rajas and Tamas, the Goddess is called 'Triguṇā' i.e. possessed of three qualities. But as the personified energy of Śiva, who is the Supreme Being, devoid of attributes she is called Nirguṇā.

9 She is the mother-goddess of Viṣṇu, Brahmā and Rudra, the synthetic form of three qualities responsible for the creation, maintenance and dissolution of the universe.

14. Formerly you were born as the daughter of Dakṣa and were married to Śiva. You destroyed the great misery of Brahmā and others.

15. Being disrespected by your father, you cast off your body in accordance with your vow. You then went to your own world and Śiva became miserable.

16. O great Goddess, the purpose of the gods has not been completely carried out. The sages are agitated. Hence we, Gods, have sought refuge in you.

17. O great Goddess, please fulfil the desire of the God, O Śivā, so that the words of Sanatkumāra may be fruitful.

18. O Goddess, incarnating again on the earth please be the wife of Rudra (Śiva) again. Carry on your sports in a fitting manner and let the Gods be happy.

19. O Goddess, may Rudra too, the resident of Kailāsa be happy. Let all become happy. Let misery perish entirely.

Brahmā said :—

20. Saying so, Viṣṇu and the other gods, full of loving devotion remained waiting silently and humbly.

21-22. Śivā too was delighted on hearing the eulogy of the gods and ascertaining the course of the same after remembering her lord Śiva, the compassionate Umā addressed smilingly the gods, chief of whom was Viṣṇu. The Goddess, favourably disposed to her devotees, said:—

Umā said :—

23. O Viṣṇu, O, Brahmā, O Gods and sages who are free from sorrow and pain ye listen to my words. I am delighted undoubtedly.

24. My activities are conducive to happiness everywhere in the three worlds. The delusion of Dakṣa and other things were carried out by me alone.

25. I shall take a full incarnation on the earth. There is no doubt in this. There are many reasons for the same. I shall mention them with respect.

26. Formerly, O gods, with great devotion Himācala and Menā rendered service to me in my life as Sati, like my parents.

27. Even now they continuously render me service and

Menā particularly (does so). There is no doubt about my becoming their daughter.

28. Just as you, Rudra too, desires my incarnation in the abode of Himavat. Hence I shall incarnate. That shall be the end of misery in the world.

29. All of you return to your abodes. You shall be happy for a long time. After incarnating I shall give Menā full happiness.

30. I shall become Śiva's wife. But this desire is a great secret with me. Śiva's divine sport is wonderful. It deludes even the wise.

31-32. Ever since I cast off my body born of Dakṣa on seeing my lord's disrespect at the hands of my father at the altar of sacrifice, my lord Rudra is tormented by thoughts about me.

33-34. He saw my anger at the altar of my father's sacrifice. Thinking that the virtuous lady had cast-off her body out of love for him he became a Yogin and abandoned home-life. He assumed an unearthly form and features. But he could not bear my separation.

35. On account of me he was much distressed. He put on an abnormal dress. Ever since he forsook the excellent pleasure of love.

36. Hear further, O Viṣṇu, O Brahmā, O sages and O gods, the divine sports of the supreme lord Śiva, that protect the universe.

37. Oppressed by the pangs of bereavement He wreathed a garland of my bones. Although He is the sole enlightened god He did not get peace anywhere.

38. Like a non-god, like a helpless creature he roamed about here and there and cried aloud. The lord Himself could not distinguish between the proper and the improper.

39. The lord Śiva did this just to show the behaviour of a love-lorn lover. He blabbered like a lover in despair due to separation.

40. But really the supreme lord has no aberrations, is not distressed and remains unconquered. My master Śiva is perfect, lord of all and the controller of illusion.

41. He is not tarnished by illusion. Of what avail are illusion, love and other emotions for Him?

42. Rudra, the lord, is anxious to marry me and hence my incarnation on the Earth at the residence of Menā and Himācala, O gods.

43. In order to propitiate Rudra, I shall incarnate as the daughter of Menā, the wife of Himācala, in accordance with the way of the world.

44. After performing a severe penance as His devotee I shall become Rudra's beloved and then perform the work of the gods. This is truth, real truth, there is no doubt about it.

45. All of you return to your abodes. Continuously worship Śiva. Undoubtedly your miseries will be quelled by His favour.

46. By the grace of merciful lord Śiva, you will achieve auspicious results. As the wife of that lord I shall be honoured and worshipped in the world.

Brahmā said :—

47. O dear, even as the gods were watching, Śivā, the mother of the universe, vanished after saying this and returned immediately to her world.

48. After making obeisance to the direction in which she went, the delighted Viṣṇu and others, sages and the gods, returned to their abodes.

49. O excellent sages, thus I have narrated to you the auspicious narrative of the goddess Durgā. It is always pleasing to men and it bestows worldly pleasures and salvation.

50. Whoever hears or recites this with concentration, reads or teaches this, will obtain the fruits of all desires.

CHAPTER FIVE

(*Menā obtains the boon*)

Nārada said :—

1. When the Goddess Durgā vanished and the gods returned to their abodes, what happened next?

2. O dear, how did Menā and the lord of the mountains perform the great penance? How did he beget a daughter of Menā. Please narrate.

Brahmā said :—

3. O best of brahmins, O most excellent of my sons, listen to that great account. After bowing to Śiva with devotion I shall narrate that story which increases devotion.

4. When Viṣṇu and other gods returned after instructing him, the lord of the mountains and Menā performed a great penance.

5. Meditating on Śivā and Śiva day and night with devout mind, the couple worshipped them continuously.

6. The beloved of the mountain worshipped the goddess along with Śiva, joyously. She gave charitable gifts always to the brahmins for their satisfaction.

7. Desirous of obtaining a child, she worshipped Śivā everyday for twenty-seven years beginning it in the month of March-April.

8. Observing a fast on the eighth day of the lunar fortnight, she made charitable gifts of sweets, offerings of oblation rice cakes, puddings and fragrant flowers on the ninth day.

9. She made clay idol of the Goddess and worshipped her by offering various things on the banks of the Gaṅgā in Auṣadhiprastha.[10]

10. On some days she observed a complete fast. On some days she observed sacred rites. Some days wind alone constituted her food and some days she drank only water.

11. With her mind fixed on Śivā, Menā passed twenty seven years with pleasure and brilliant lustre.

12. At the end of twenty-seven years, Umā the beloved of Śiva, the mother of the world and identical with the universe became highly delighted.

13. The goddess Śivā, delighted by her good devotion appeared in front of Menā in order to bless her.

14. Appearing to her in a form of divine limbs through a lustrous zone, she smilingly said to Menā.

10. It was the capital of Himavat. Cf. Kālidāsa's Kumāra 6. 33, 36. The name indicates that it was a market place for the mountainous herbs.

The Goddess said :—

15. O beloved of the mountain, I am delighted by your penance. O chaste lady, tell me what you desire in your mind.

16. O Menā, whatever is desired by you by penance, sacred rites and ecstatic contemplation I shall grant you and that too whenever you wish for it.

17. Then seeing the goddess in her presence Menā bowed and spoke these words:—

Menā said:—

18. O Goddess, your form has been perceived by me directly, just now. I wish to eulogise you. Be pleased.

Brahmā said:—

19. On being thus requested by Menā, the goddess Umā, the enchantress of everyone, embraced Menā and was highly delighted.

20. Acquiring very great wisdom, Menā eulogised Śivā, who had appeared in person, by means of pleasing words with great devotion.

Menā said:—

21. I bow to the great goddess,[11] the bestower of all desires, I bow to her who wields great illusion, the creator and sustainer of the universe.

22. I bow to her of contemplative sleep, and to her the wielder of great illusion and the cause of permanent bliss. I bow to the mother of the universe. I bow to Siddhā having the garland of auspicious lotuses.

23. I bow to the grandmother, of perpetual bliss. I bow to the goddess who dispels the sorrow of the devotees,

11. The Goddess Śivā is mentioned here under a variety of names, forms, attributes and actions She is contemplated upon by the ascetics for the deliverance from the bondage of this world. She is propitiated for the satiation of desires with the bloody sacrifices performed according to Atharvanic rites.

She is represented in her milder and fiercer forms. In her milder form she is pleasing as the moon, gracious as the mother! In her terrible aspect she is furious as the fire and scorching as the sun

who is a model for all women and who constitutes the intellect of all living beings.

24. You are the cause of the snapping of all fetters of ascetics. Which one of your powers can be sung by women like me? You are violence mentioned in the Atharvaveda. You (of such powerful means) fulfil my desire.

25. The living beings are being united to the different principles of the nature of permanence and otherwise and those without substance are discarded. You are the inherent power of those permanent principles. In the proper time you become a woman of ability with Yogic powers.

26. You are the origin and the sustainer of the worlds. You are the eternal Prakṛti, the great, by whom even the Brahman is brought under control. O you, of noble nature, O mother, be pleased with me.

27. You are the great power latent in fire; you are the burning power of the sun's rays; you are the pleasing power of the extensive moonlight. O Goddess, I bow to you.

28. To good women you manifest yourself as their beloved; to persons of perfect self-control and sublimation you manifest yourself as eternal; to the entire universe you manifest as desire; as of Viṣṇu you are the Māyā so you are of Śiva.

29. You assume different forms as you please for the purpose of creation, sustenance and annihilation and give birth to the bodies of Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva. You, of such potentiality, be pleased. Obeisance to you again.

Brahmā said:—

30. Thus eulogised, the goddess spoke to Menā desiring her to choose a boon.

Umā said:—

31. O Himācala's beloved, you are as favourite to me as my vital air. Whatever you desire I shall give you. There is nothing that I can withhold from you.

32. On hearing these nectar-like words of the Goddess, the delighted Menā, the wife of Himācala, said.

Menā said:—

33. O Śivā, Hail, Hail ! O great goddess, If you consider me worthy of a boon, I shall choose one.

34. O mother of the universe, at first let me have a hundred sons endowed with longevity, heroism, prosperity and accomplishments.

35. After that let me have a daughter of comely features and good qualities who will delight both the families and who will be revered by the three worlds.

36. O Śivā, be my daughter for fulfilling the needs of the gods. O Goddess, be Rudra's wife and indulge in divine sports with the lord.

Brahmā said:—

37. On hearing the words of Menā, the delighted goddess spoke smilingly, fulfilling her desire.

The Goddess said:—

38. May hundred heroic sons be born to you. One of them very strong will be born at first.

39. I shall be born as your daughter since I am delighted by your devotion. Since I have been served by the gods I shall fulfil their desire and carry out their activities.

Brahmā said:—

40. Saying so, the Goddess Śivā vanished from there even as Menā was watching.

41. O dear one, on getting the desired boon from the Goddess, Menā attained immeasurable joy. Her misery occasioned by penance vanished.

42. Bowing down in that direction, the chaste lady of delighted mind returned to her abode repeating the benedictory word "Jaya" (be victorious).

43. She told her husband about the boon, which had already been understood by him through good omens, by her words which were rendered useless.

44. On hearing the words of Menā, the lord of mountains became delighted. He praised his wife who was devoted to Śiva lovingly.

45. O sage, when their mutual sexual intercourse took

place, Menā conceived and the child in the womb gradually grew up.

46-48. She gave birth to a beautiful son Maināka[12] who later on became the worthy recepient of the love of Nāga ladies and who later on entered into an alliance with the lord of ocean.O celestial sage, when Indra, the slayer of Vṛtra, became angry and began to chop off the wings of mountains, he retained his wings, nay, he did not even feel the pain of being wounded by the thunderbolt. He had good limbs. He had neat strength and prowess. He was the most important of all the mountains born of him. He too became the lord of mountains.

49. In the city of Himācala there was a wonderful celebration of the event. The couple were highly delighted. Their pain was at an end.

50. He gave monetary gifts and charitable offerings to brahmins. Their devotion to Śivā and Śiva became increased.

CHAPTER SIX

(*Pārvatī's birth*)

Brahmā said:—

1. Then the couple, with great devotion remembered the goddess for her birth in order to carry out the work of the gods.

2. Then the Goddess who formerly had cast off her body to spite her father, by means of her Yogic powers, desired to be born of the wife of the mountain.

3. In order to make her own words true, the great goddess, who bestows everything desired, delightedly entered the mind of the mountain with all her constituent elements.

4. Hence he shone with an extraordinary splendour

12. Maināka, the son of Menakā and Himavat, is represented as the most valiant of a hundred sons of his parents. When Indra clipped the wings of the mountains he is said to have been the only one who escaped He is placed near the southern sea between India and Ceylon, for the present text glorifies his friendship with the ocean. Cf also Skanda P. VI 9. 10-11 "Mainākaḥ Sumudrântaḥ".

and great joy. With a resplendent brilliance, he, of lofty mind, became invincible like a blazing fire.

5. Then, in a beneficent hour, the lord of the mountains deposited in his beloved the entire constituent element of Śiva by means of ecstatic contemplation.

6. The wife of the mountain, by the grace of the goddess who had sympathetically stationed herself in the mind of the mountain, conceived.

7. The beloved of the mountain, Menā, shone all the more by the presence of the goddess who bore the entire universe. She appeared as if she was in a brilliant sphere.

8. Menā bore the characteristic signs of pregnancy which almost indicated the imminent rise in pleasure of her lord and served as the auspicious cause for the future bliss of the gods.

9. The weakness of her body did not allow her to wear ornaments. Her face became pale like the Lodhra flower. She resembled the night when there are very few stars and the moon is in a waning state.[13]

10. Kissing her face, emitting the fragrance of the earth in the course of his secret dalliance, the lord of the mountains, was not satiated. His love increased.[14]

11. The lord of mountains asked Menā's friends frequently—"What are the desires of Menā ? She herself does not express them out of bashfulness."[15]

12. Whatever product of the mountain she wished to have in the course of her pregnancy she found brought to her. There was nothing which he, the lord of the mountain could not accomplish in the heaven too.

13. Surmounting the difficulties of the early days of pregnancy, she grew more plump in her limbs. Menā then shone like a tender creeper putting forth more leaves and flowers.

14. The lord of the mountains considered his pregnant queen like the earth with a treasure within and like the Śamī twig with latent fire in it.[16]

13 For the similarity of idea and verbal expression compare Kālidāsa's Raghuvaṁsa. III. 2.

14. Cf. Ibid. III. 3.

15. Cf Ibid. III. 5.

16. Ibid. III. 9.

15. The intelligent lord of mountains performed all the sacred rites befitting his love for his wife, the loftiness of his mind, the vastness of riches earned by him and the injunctions of the Vedas.

16-17. At the proper time, he saw his wife Menā about to be delivered of the child, with delight, as one sees the sky enveloped with clouds. The lord of the mountains felt greatly rejoiced on seeing his wife of sound and auspicious in limbs the "labour-chamber" presided over by physicians. She felt very brilliant with the mother of the universe in her womb.

18. In the mean time, O sage, Viṣṇu, and other gods as well as the sages came there and eulogised Śivā who was in the womb.

The gods said:—

19. O Goddess, be victorious, O intelligent one, O mother of the universe, O great Goddess, O you of true rites, prone to truth, true in three things, O truth-formed.

20. O you stationed in truth, we have sought refuge in you. O you delighted with truth, Origin of truth, Truth of Truth, of truthful sight.

21. O beloved of Śiva, great goddess, O destroyer of the miseries of gods, you are the mother of the three worlds, consort of Śiva, pervasive and favourably disposed to your devotees.

22. O goddess of the three worlds, manifest yourself and perform the function of the gods. O goddess, all of us are well protected only due to your favour.

23. Happy persons attain their happiness only from you. Nothing shines in the three worlds without you.

Brahmā said:—

24. Thus eulogising, in many ways, the great goddess stationed in the womb, the gods returned to their abodes, highly delighted in their minds.

25. When nine months were completed, in the tenth month, the goddess, the mother of the universe, bore all the states of a child in the womb in the complete form.

26. The time was good. The planets, stars and the

luminary heavenly bodies were quiet; the sky was clear and there was brilliance in all the quarters.

27. The earth consisting of forests, villages and oceans was very auspicious. Lotuses blossomed in lakes, rivers and tanks.

28 O excellent sage, diverse winds gentle to the touch blew; good men rejoiced and bad people became unhappy.

29. The gods stood in the sky and sounded big drums. A shower of flowers fell. Excellent Gandharvas sang sweet songs.

30. Vidyādhara women and the celestial nymphs danced in the sky; in the heavenly region great festivities were celebrated by the gods and others.

31. At that time Śivā, Satī of perfect power formerly appeared in front of Menā in her real form.

32. She was born at midnight when the constellation Mṛgaśiras was in conjunction with the moon on the ninth day in the month of Madhu (March-April) in the spring season like the Gaṅgā from the moon's sphere.

33. Coming out of the belly of Menā at the proper time in her real form, she resembled Lakṣmī coming out of the ocean.

34. When she was born, Śiva was glad. A slow, fragrant and auspicious wind blew favourably.

35. Along with the rain there was a shower of flowers. Fires calmly glowed and the clouds rumbled.

36. At the time of her birth, riches and prosperity flourished in the city of Himavat. All miseries perished.

37. Viṣṇu and other gods reached there in time and saw the mother of the universe. They were delighted and happy.

38. They eulogised Śivā the mother of the universe, the beloved of Śiva, of great illusory power, of divine features and resident of Śiva's region.

The Gods said:—

39. O great goddess, O mother of the universe, O achiever of all accomplishments, you alone can carry out the work of the gods. Hence we bow to you always.

40. O you favourably disposed to the devotees, do

everything conducive to the happiness of the Gods. You have fulfilled the desire of Menā. Now, you fulfil that of Śiva.

Brahmā said :—

41. After eulogising Śivā thus, Viṣṇu and other gods bowed to her again delightedly and returned to their abodes praising her great divine ways.

42. O Nārada, Menā rejoiced much on seeing goddess Umā of the splendour of the blue lotus as her daughter.

43. On seeing her divine features, the beloved of the mountain attained perfect knowledge. After that realisation she eulogised the supreme Goddess with very great delight.

Menā said :—

44. "Great favour has been shown by you, O Goddess, O mother of the universe, inasmuch as you have manifested yourself in front of me brilliantly.

45. You are the primordial one among all Energies. O Śivā, you are the mother of the three worlds. O Goddess you are the beloved of Śiva, you are great goddess eulogised by the gods.

46. O great Goddess, be pleased. Remain in my meditation in this form, but have the form of my daughter in public view "

Brahmā said :—

47. On hearing these words of Menā, the wife of the mountain, the delighted goddess Śivā replied to Menā, the beloved of the mountain thus.

The Goddess said : —

48. "O Menā, formerly you served me excellently. I am delighted by your devotion. I have come near you to grant you a boon.

49. On hearing my words "Express your wish and choose a boon" you had chosen the boon "great Goddess, become my daughter. Do what is beneficent to the gods."

50. Accordingly granting you the boon I returned to

my abode. O beloved of the mountain, I have become your daughter at the proper time.

51. I have assumed the divine form now, so that you may be reminded of me. In a human form if I had appeared, it would have put you out of knowledge about me.

52. Constantly thinking of me in the form of your daughter, or in the divine form with love, both of you will surely attain my region, the great goal.

53. I shall do the work of the gods showing my wonderfully divine sports. I shall become the wife of Śiva and redeem good men."

Brahmā said: –

54. After saying thus Śivā kept quiet. Even as the mother was watching with pleasure, she assumed the body of a daughter by her power of illusion.

CHAPTER SEVEN

(The childhood sports of Pārvatī)

Brahmā said:—

1. The goddess of great brilliance assumed the form of her baby child in front of Menā and began to cry in accordance with the ways of the world.

2. On account of her splendour that diffused all round the lying-in-couch, the midnight lamps that burnt in the lying-in-chamber were rendered dim in a trice, O sage.

3. The women in the house were extremly glad on hearing the gentle cry of the child. In their excited flutter and great pleasure they rushed in.

4. The superintendent of the harem immediately informed the king about the birth of Pārvatī which was pleasant and conducive to the work of the gods.

5. To the superintendent of the harem who brought the news, there was nothing which the king could notgive even including his royal white umbrella.

6. Accompanied by the chief priest and learned brah-

mins, the lord of mountains came there and saw the child who shone in her lovely clothes.

7. The lord of mountains rejoiced on seeing the child shining in dark splendour like that of the blue lotus.

8. All the citizens there, both men and women, rejoiced much. There were great festivities. Different sorts of musical instruments were played.

9 Auspicious songs were sung. The dancing girls exhibited their saltatorial skill. The lord of mountains performed post-natal sacred rites and made charitable gifts to the brahmins.

10. Himavat came to the outer gate of the palace and joined the festivities. With a delighted mind he distributed monetary gifts to the beggars.

11. In an auspicious hour, in the company of the sages, Himavat named his daughter Kālī and assigned other pleasing names to her.

12. He gave charitable gifts to the brahmins out of love and respect. Varieties of festivities were gone through with suitable music.

13. Though he had many sons, the lord of mountain and his wife rejoiced more on seeing Kālī frequently, after these celebrations.

14. There in the palace of the lord of mountains the goddess Śivā grew up like Gaṅgā in the rainy season and like the moon-light in the autumn.

15. The goddess Kālī of exquisite body and comely appearance acquired more and more splendour like the disk of the moon acquiring more and more digits day by day.

16. The child was fondly attached to every member of the family, Hence the kinsmen called her Pārvatī, a name befitting her family. The girl had all the qualities of good conduct and behaviour.

17. Afterwards when Kālī wanted to perform a penance she was forbidden by her mother who said—"O, no (U mā). Hence O sage, the sweetfaced lady came to be called Umā in the world.

18-19. Although he had many sons, the eyes of the mountain were never satiated on seeing the child Pārvatī endowed with good fortune. In the spring season there may be many

flowers in full bloom but the swarms of bees, O excellent sage, are specially drawn to the mango blossom.

20. The mountain Himālaya was both embellished and sanctified by his daughter like a learned man by his speech of grammatical purity.

Just as a lamp in the house is praised by leaping flames of brilliance, just as the path of the good by the Gaṅgā, so also the lord of mountains was respected on account of Pārvatī.

22. During her childhood, the goddess played frequently on the sandy banks of the Gaṅgā in the middle of her playmates with balls and dolls.

23. O sage, the goddess Śivā when the suitable time for her education arrived learnt all the lores from a good preceptor, with concentrated mind and great pleasure.

24. Just as the flock of swans returns to the Gaṅgā in the autumnal season and just as the brilliant lustre manifests itself in the medicinal herbs during the night, so also all the learning of the previous birth returned to Kālī.

25. O sage, thus I have described one of the divine sports of Śivā. I shall narrate another one of her divine sports. You listen to it lovingly.

CHAPTER EIGHT

(*Nārada-Himālaya Conversation*)

Brahmā said :

1. Once, induced by Śiva, you went to the abode of Himācala lovingly, you who have the knowledge of Śiva and who are the foremost among those who know the divine sports of Śiva.

2. O sage Nārada, on seeing you, the lord of the mountains bowed to you and worshipped you. He called his daughter and asked her to fall at your feet.

3. O excellent sage, he bowed to you again. Himavat joined his palms in reverence and bent his head considering it his duty and spoke to you.

Himavat said :—

4. O sage Nārada, of good knowledge, O lord, foremost among the sons of Brahmā, you are omniscient. You are sympathetic. You are engaged in rendering help to others.

5. Please read the horoscope of my daugther and tell me about her good and bad fortune. Whose beloved wife will my fortunate daughter be ?

Bramhā said :—

6-7. O excellent sage, being thus requested by Himavat the lord of mountains, you looked at Kālī's palm and the limbs as well. O dear, you are wise. You know many facts. You are eloquent in speech. You then spoke.

Nārada said :

8. "O Menā, O king of mountains, this daughter o yours has all auspicious signs. Like the first digit of the moon she will increase day by day.

9. She will delight her husband, and heighten the glory of her parents. She will be a great chaste lady. She will grant bliss to everyone always.

10. I see all good signs in the plam of your daughter, O lord of mountains. There is an abnormal line also. Listen to the indication thereof.

11. Her husband will be a naked Yogin, without any qualities. He will be free from lust. He will have neither mother nor father. He will be indifferent to honours. His dress and manners will be inauspicious.

Brahmā said:—

12. On hearing your words the couple thought them true. Both Menā and Himavat were much distressed.

13. O sage, on hearing your words, and inferring that indications referred to Śiva, Pārvati's joy knew no bounds.

14. Convinced that Nārada's words could not be false, Śivā turned her mind and love to Śiva's feet.

15. The lord of mountains who was very much grieved in mind spoke to you, "O Nārada, O sage, what is the way out ? What shall I do ? A great misery has befallen us".

16. On hearing that, O sage, you who are eloquent in speech, delighted Himavat by your sweet words of auspicious import and spoke to console him.

Nārada said :—

17. "O lord of mountains, listen to my words with affability. They are true. They cannot be false. The lines in the palm are the lines of Brahmā. They cannot be untrue.

18. O lord of mountains, there is no doubt that her husband will be such a person. You now hear what you have to do whereby you will be happy.

19. There is a bridegroom like that. He is lord Śiva who has sportively assumed a physical form. In Him all bad characteristics are equal to good characteristics.

20. In a majestic person a defect does not produce misery. It may well cause misery in a non-majestic person. Sun, fire and Gaṅgā may be cited as examples.

21. Hence you give your daughter in marriage to Śiva. That will be a wise step. Lord Śiva who is the sole lord, unchanging and without any aberration is worthy of being resorted to.

22. By performing penance, Śiva can be propitiated quickly and He will accept her undoubtedly.

23. In every respect, Śiva, the lord of all, is the most suitable person. He cannot be slain even by thunderbolts. He can render Brahmā and others distressed."[17]

24. O dear sage, after saying this you continued. You delighted him with auspicious words. You spoke to the king of the mountains.

25. "O lord of mountains, she will be the wife of Śiva and will remain his favourite always. She will be a chaste lady of good rites. She will increase the pleasure of her parents.

26. Performing a penance she will fascinate Śiva's mind towards herself. He too will marry none else except her.

17. Our translation is based on the following emended text :
"कुलिशैरप्यविध्वंसी ब्रह्मादीनामकष्टदः"

27. A love akin to this pair will not be found anywhere. Never in the past was it seen nor will it occur in future. Nor it is current now.

28. O best of mountains, the two will fulfil the work of the gods. They will resuscitate those who have breathed their last.

29. O lord of mountains, Śiva will become Ardhanārīśvara (half male and half female), with your daughter forming half the part of your body. Their meeting once again will be delightful.

30. After propitiating lord Śiva, the lord of all, by the power of her penance, your daughter will take away half the body of Śiva.

31. By propitating Śiva with her penance she will acquire the lustre of gold and will be known as Svarṇagaurī. Your daughter will be as fair-complexioned as lightning.

32. This girl will be famous in the name of Gaurī. She will deserve the respect of *Viṣṇu, Brahmā and the other Gods.*

33. O excellent mountain, you shall not give her to anyone else. This is a secret of the gods. This shall not be revealed to any one else.

34. O celestial sage, Nārada, on hearing these words that you spoke O, sage, the eloquent Himavat spoke thus:

Himavat said:—

35. O sage Nārada, O intelligent one, I have one submission to make. Please listen to it lovingly and make us delightful.

36. It is heard that the great God abhors all attachments. He has perfect self-control. He is ever busy in penance and is out of reach of even the Gods.

37. O celestial sage, He is in the path of meditation. How can He withdraw His mind from the supreme Brahman? I have a great doubt in this respect.

38-39. The supreme Brahman is great and imperishable. It is like the streak of a lamp. It is termed Sadāśiva. It is without aberration. It is beyond Brahmā. It is both full

and devoid of qualities. It has no special traits, no desires. It sees within[18] and not without.

40. O sage, from the Kinnaras who come here, such are the things heard about Him. Can it be untrue ?

41. This is also heard that Śiva had entered into a contract with the lady Satī. Listen to what I say ?

42. "O Satī, Dākṣāyaṇī, my beloved, I shall not take the hand of any woman except you as my wife. This is the truth that I say."

43. This was the agreement that He made with Satī formerly. She is dead. How then will He take another woman to be His wife.

Brahmā said:—

44. After saying these words, the lord of mountains kept quiet in your presence. O celestial sage, on hearing that, you spoke words that revealed the truth.

Nārada said:—

45. "O lord of mountains, of great intellect, you need not worry. This daughter of yours, Pārvatī, was formerly the daughter of Dakṣa.

46. Satī was her auspicious name. Satī who was Dakṣa's daughter became Rudra's wife.

47. Being dishonoured at the sacrifice of her father, and being the witness of Śiva's dishonour she was furious and she cast off her body.

48. She herself is born in your house as Pārvatī. There is no doubt that she will become Śiva's wife."

Brahmā said :—

49-50. O sage, all these details you mentioned to the lord of mountains. You told the previous history of Pārvatī that increased her pleasure and on hearing which, the lord of mountains, his wife and children were freed from all suspicions.

51. On hearing the story from Nārada, Pārvatī bent

18. We have adopted the reading अन्त: for अत:

down her head in bashfulness but her smile heightened the beauty of her face.

52. On hearing the story, the lord of mountains stroked her fondly, kissed her on the head and placed her on his seat.

53. O sage, on seeing her seated there you spoke again delighting the lord of mountains, Menakā and her sons.

54-55. "O king of mountains, she will have a better throne than this. Śiva's thigh will be her permanent abode. On getting the seat on the thigh of Śiva your daughter will go to the world where no eye or mind can reach."

Brahmā said : —

56. O Nārada, after saying this to the lord of mountains, you went to heaven immediately. The lord of mountains too, whose mind was filled with joy, returned to his palace endowed with all riches.

CHAPTER NINE

(*The parents advise Pārvatī to propitiate Śiva. Śiva appears before Pārvatī in dream*)

Nārada said:—

1. O Brahmā, O dear one, O foremost among the devotees of Śiva, O intelligent one, taking pity on me you have narrated a wonderful story to me and have increased my pleasure thereby.

2. O Brahmā, when I, of divine vision, had gone to my abode what happened thereafter? Please tell me now.

Brahmā said:—

3. After you had gone to heaven, some time passed. Once Menā approached the lord of mountains and bowed to him.

4. After waiting there for some time with humility, the

beloved of the mountain addressed her lord; the chaste lady who loved her daughter as ardently as her own life spoke to the lord of mountains thus.

Menā said :—

5. As but is natural to women, the words of the sage have not been understood by me well. (I think it is better) that you perform the marriage of our daughter with a handsome bridegroom.

6. Let the bridegroom of Pārvatī be born of a good family endowed with good characteristic signs. In every respect that marriage will yield an unprecedented happiness.

7. Obeisance to you. Do everything necessary to make our daughter, as beloved to us as our own lives, very happy and delighted after being united with a good bridegroom.

Brahmā said :—

8. After saying this, with tears in her eyes Menā fell at the feet of her husband. Raising her, the lord of mountains, the most excellent among intelligent people, made a true statement.

Himācala said:—

9. O gentle lady Menakā, listen. I shall tell you the truth. Do not be under false impressions. The sage's statement will never be false.

10. If you feel affectionate towards your daughter, zealously instruct your daughter. Let her perform the penance with Śiva as the object, devotedly and steadily.

11. If Śiva is delighted, O Menakā, He will marry her. Everything shall be auspicious. The inauspicious features indicated by Nārada will perish.

12. All inauspicious things are auspicious in Sadāśiva. Hence immediately teach your daughter to hasten to perform the penance for attaining Śiva.

Brahmā said :—

13. On hearing these words of the lord of mountains, Menā was greatly delighted. She approached her daughter to advise her to take interest in penance.

14. On seeing the tender limbs of her daughter, Menakā was greatly distressed. Her eyes welled up in tears immediately.

15. The beloved of the lord of mountains was unable to advise her daughter to perform penance. Pārvatī understood the implied wish of her mother quickly.

16. Then the omniscient supreme goddess Pārvatī immediately spoke to her mother after consoling her again and again.

Pārvatī said :—

17. O mother, of great intelligence, listen in the early dawn to-day. At night I had a dream I shall tell you. Be pleased.

18. A brahmin sage advised me lovingly and compassionately to perform the penance of Śiva, O mother.

Brahmā said :—

19. On hearing that, Menakā called her husband there and told him the dream as seen by her daughter.

20. After hearing the dream of his daughter from Menakā, the lord of the mountains was pleased and he spoke thus to his wife.

The lord of the mountains said :—

21. O dear, at the end of the latter half of the night, I too had a dream. Please listen to it lovingly. I shall zealously explain it.

22. A great saint of exquisite limbs, as mentioned by Nārada, arrived near my city with very great pleasure in order to perform penance there.

23. Delighted much I took my daughter there with me. He was recognised as Lord Śiva, the bridegroom as mentioned b y Nārada

24. Advising our daughter to render service to that saint I requested him to approve of it but He didn't.

25. A great discussion took place (between her and Śiva based o[illegible] Sāṅkhya and Vedānta.[19] Thereafter at His bidding my daugh[illegible]ter stayed there.

19. Co m[illegible]are a dialogue between Śiva and Pārvatī who represent the different pha[illegible]es and aspects of Puruṣa and Prakṛti respectively. Cf. Ch. 13 of this sec[illegible]ion.

26. Concealing her love in the heart she served Him with devotion. This is the dream I had, O bright-faced lady and I have told you all.

27. Hence, dear Menā, for some time the result of this has to be watched. Certainly know this to be the proper step for me.

Brahmā said :—

28. O excellent sage, the lord of the mountains having thus explained to Menakā, both of them remained watching its result, pure in mind.

29-30. When a few days passed by, lord Śiva, the goal of saintly men, the cause of protection and enjoyment wandering here and there in his flutter and excitement due to the separation from Satī, came there with pleasure accompanied by a few of his Gaṇas, in order to perform penance. The lord was completely agitated due to Satī's love and separation from her.

31. He performed his penance there. Pārvatī engaged herself in His service continuously accompanied by two of her maids.

32. Although the lord Śiva was hit and wounded by the arrows of Kāma who was sent thither by the gods to enchant Him, He was not swayed at all.

33. Burning Kāma there by His fiery eye, on remembering my words, the lord became angry with me and vanished from the scene.

34. After sometime, Lord Śiva quelled the pride of Pārvatī but he was propitiated by her again performing great penance.

35. Following the conventions of the world, the lord married Pārvatī after being sponsored by Viṣṇu. Then everything auspicious ensued.

36. O dear, thus the story of the lord, the divine story of Śiva, has been narrated in brief. What is it that you wish to hear again ?

CHAPTER TEN

(Mars is born and is raised to the status of a Planet by Śiva's grace)

Nārada said :—

1. O Brahmā, the fortunate disciple of Viṣṇu, O lord, foremost among the devotees of Śiva, please narrate the divine sport of Śiva in detail to me.

2. What did Śiva, separated from Satī, do? When did He go to the excellent ridge of the Himavat to perform penance?

3. How did the discussion between Śivā and Śiva take place? How did Pārvatī attain Śiva by performing penance?

4. O Brahmā, these and other things, connected with the divine life of Śiva, pleasing and auspicious, you kindly narrate.

Sūta said :—

5. On hearing this inquiry of Nārada, Brahmā, the excellent lord of the worlds, remembered the lotus-like feet of Śiva and spoke.

Brahmā said :—

6. O celestial sage, most excellent among the devotees of Śiva, listen to His glory that sanctifies, renders everything auspicious and increases devotion.

7. Returning to His mountain, Śiva in his excitement caused by his separation from his beloved, remembered Satī, who was dearer to Him than his very life.

8. Addressing His Gaṇas, He bewailed her and narrated her good qualities heightening love. In this way He showed the way of the world to the people.

9. Abandoning the polished manners of a householder, He cast off his dress and roamed about all the worlds, clever in divine sports that He was.

10-11. Not seeing her anywhere, the pangs of his separation from Satī increasing, Śiva, the benefactor of His devotees, returned to His mountain and entered into trance

for the destruction of misery. Thereupon He saw His imperishable real form.

12. Thus Śiva remained for a long time eliminating the three attributes, and unaffected by aberrations. The lord Himself, the controller of illusion remained in the state of the Supreme Brahman.

13. Then He gave up trance. Many years elapsed. What happened thereafter, I shall now recount to you.

14. The drops of sweat caused by exhaustion fell on the Earth from the lord's forehead and took the shape of a child immediately.

15. O sage, the child was tawny-coloured and had four arms. He was comely in features. His brilliance was supermundane and unbearable to others.

16. Like a common child he cried in front of the Great lord who was engaged in worldly activities.

17. Afraid of Śiva, the Earth pondered deeply over it and appeared before him in the guise of a good lady.

18. She lifted up the child immediately and held him to her chest. Lovingly she suckled the child with her excellent breast milk that flowed over her body.

19. She kissed the child's face lovingly and petted him smilingly. In the absence of Satī she herself acted as his mother in the interest of lord Śiva.

20. Śiva knew that she was the Earth. Śiva, the cause of protection and enjoyment, the immanent soul, on seeing her activities became contented and eagerly said to her laughingly.

21. "O Earth, you are blessed. Rear this child of mine lovingly, born of my glittering drops of sweat over you.

22. Although the child is born of the sweat of my body, O Earth, he will be famous in the world after your name. He will be a bestower of pleasures and will be free from the three distresses always.

23. This boy of yours will be a bestower of lands and will have good qualities. He will make me too happy. Accept him with pleasure".

Brahmā said :—

24. After saying this He stopped. He was a bit

relieved of His pangs of separation. Śiva, free from aberrations, and a lover of good men, acted thus only for following the worldly conventions.

25. The Earth too, as Śiva bade her, returned to her abode along with the child. She was extremely happy.

26. The child acquired the name Bhauma (son of the Earth). He attained youth immediately. For a long time he worshipped lord Śiva at Kāśī.

27. By the grace of lord Śiva, the son of the Earth, acquired the status of a planet. He went to the heavenly sphere beyond the region of Venus.

28. O sage, thus I have told you the story of Śiva and His separation from Satī. Now listen to the story of His performance of penance.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

(*Śiva and Himavat meet together*)

Brahmā said :—

1-2. O Nārada, the daughter of the mountain, honoured in the three worlds, was brought up in the palace of Himācala. When she was eight years old, Śiva distressed by Satī's separation came to know of her birth. Keeping her wonderful memory within his heart He rejoiced much.

3. In the meantime, following the conventions of the world, Śiva wished to perform penance in order to concentrate his mind properly.

4-5. Taking some important Gaṇas of quiet nature, Nandin and others, with Him, He went to the excellent Himālayan ridge—Gaṅgāvatāra, O sage, where the great holy river Gaṅgā flowed from Brahmapura[20] formerly, in order to quell sins.

20. Cunningham (A. G. P. 299) identifies Brahmapura (the Po-lo-ki-mo-pu-lo of Hwen Thsang: Waters, I. P. 329) with the capital city Vairāṭapaṭṭana of the hilly country lying between the Alakanandā and the Karnali rivers. The territory covered the districts of Garhwal and Kumaon (Cf. Br. S. ch. 14 and G.D. P. 40) and was stretched within 667 miles in circuit.

6-7. Staying there, Śiva of full self-control, started His activities of penance. With full concentration and alertness He thought on His own Self, the cause of mental knowledge, the eternal, the luminous, free from affliction, identical with the universe, consciousness and Bliss, without a second and having no support.

8-9. When Śiva began His meditation, the Pramathas also began their meditation as well as some Gaṇas, Nandin, Bhṛṅgi etc. Some of the Gaṇas rendered service to Śiva, the Supreme Self. Some of them became His gatekeepers. They observed silence and did not shout.

10. In the meantime on hearing that Śiva had come to Auṣadhiprastha[21], the mountain Himavat too went there.

11. Accompanied by his attendants, the lord of the mountains bowed to the lord Śiva, worshipped Him with pleasure and eulogised Him wlth palms joined in reverence.

Lord Himavat said:—

12. O great god, lord of the gods, O lord Śiva, the three worlds are sustained by you alone who are lord of the worlds.

13. Obeisance to Thee, O lord of gods, obeisance to the one who has assumed the form of a Yogin, obeisance to Thee that art possessed and devoid of attributes and obeisance to Thee who art sportive.

14. O Śiva, obeisance to the resident of Kailāsa, obeisance to one who wanders all over the worlds, obeisance to thee the great lord, to the one indulging in divine sports, obeisance to the trident-holder.

15. O lord, of complete and perfect qualities, obeisance to Thee, devoid of aberrations. Obeisance to Thee without aspirations. Obeisance to Thee without desires. Obeisance to the bold one, to the great soul.

16. O overlord of the three attributes, O lord of delusion, favourably disposed towards the people, obeisance unto you, who grant inner pleasures of the soul. Obeisance to Brahman, the great soul.

17. Obeisance to Thee, worthy of being served by Viṣṇu

21. See Note No. 10

Brahmā and others; obeisance to Thee of the form of Viṣṇu and Brahmā; obeisance to Thee, the creator of Viṣṇu and Brahmā, obeisance to Thee O one favourably disposed to the devotees.

18. O one engaged in penance, O one the venue of penance; obeisance to Thee the bestower of fruits of penance; obeisance to Thee who lovest penance; obeisance to Thee of the form of Brahman and quiescent.

19. Obeisance to Thee who lay down the principles of dealings and worldly conventions; obeisance to the great Śiva full of attributes; obeisance to Thee the great soul.

20. O great lord, your divine sports are incomprehensible. They bestow happiness on saintly men. Your nature is subservient to the devotees and you are under their control. You are the performer of all activities.

21. O lord, you have come here because my fortune is in its ascendancy. You have been described as a bestower of favours to the distressed. You have put me under your patronage and protection.

22. Today my life has borne fruit, in fact everything connected with me has become fruitful since you have come here.

23. Knowing me to be your slave of great composure, O great lord, you can freely command me. With my mind not fascinated by other things I shall serve you with great pleasure.

Brahmā said :—

24. On hearing these words of the lord of mountains, lord Śiva slightly opened his eyes and cast a glance on the lord of mountains who was accompanied by his attendants.

25. On seeing the lord of mountains with his followers, the bull-bannered god Śiva, the lord of the universe permanently engaged in meditation and Yogic practice said smilingly.

Lord Śiva said:—

26. I have come to perform penance in secret on your top. Make arrangements so that none should be able to come near me.

27. You are a noble soul, the abode of penance and permanent residence of sages, gods, demons and other great men.

28. You are the permanent residence of brahmins and others; you are always sanctified by Gaṅgā; you render help to others and you are the lord and king of all mountains.

29. O king of mountains, delighted in resorting to you and controlling my senses and mind I am going to perform penance here at Gaṅgāvataraṇa.[22]

30. O lord of mountains, O best of mountains, now put forth all endeavour whereby my penance can be conducted without obstacles.

31. O excellent Mountain, this alone is the greatest service that you can render. Please arrange for it with due effort. Please return to your abode with your mind full of pleasure.

Brahmā said :—

32. After saying this, the lord of the worlds, the cause of protection and enjoyment kept silent. The lord of the mountains then spoke to Śiva with affection.

Himācala said :—

33. O great lord of the universe, I have come myself and worshipped you. What shall I ask you who stay in my own kingdom?

34. O great lord, you cannot be attained by great penance even by the gods who put forth great efforts. But you yourself have come here.

35. There is none more fortunate than me; there is none more meritorious than me, since you have come to perform penance on my summit.

36. O great lord, I consider myself greater than the god of gods. You have come here with your Gaṇas and made me blessed.

37. O lord of gods, independently and without any

22. It is a sacred place celebrated in the Matsya and Vāyu Purāṇas where the river Gaṅgā emerges from the Vindu Sarovara through visible outlets and subterranean channels.

obstacles perform your great penance. O lord,· I am your slave always. I shall do all service to you.

Brahmā said :—

38. After saying this, the lord of the mountains returned at once to his abode and enthusiastically narrated everything to his beloved wife.

39. O Nārada, calling together all his attendants with the members of their families, the lord of the mountains said emphatically.

Himācala said :—

40. From now onwards, none of you shall go to the ridge of mine, called Gaṅgāvataraṇa. This is my command. I am telling you the truth.

41. If anyone of you goes there I shall punish that rogue particularly. This is the truth I am speaking.

42. O sage, after thus checking all of his attendants, the mountain made other arrangements also. I now tell you all about the same.

CHAPTER TWELVE

(*Śiva-Himavat dialogue*)

Brahmā said

1. Then, the delighted lord of the mountains, took some fresh flowers and fruits with him and approached Śiva along with his daughter.

2. Approaching the lord of the three worlds, engaged in meditation and bowing to Him he mentally dedicated to Him, his wonderful daughter.

3. Placing the fruits and flowers in front of Him and making his daughter stand before Him, the lord of the mountains spoke to Śiva.

Himācala said:—

4. O lord, my daughter who is eager to serve you, the

moon-crested lord, I have brought here with a desire to propitiate you.

5. Let her serve you, the benefactor, for ever, along with two of her maids. O lord, if you wish to bless me, please permit her.

Brahmā said :—

6-10. Then Śiva looked at her in the first flush of her youth. Her complexion resembled the full blown blue lotus petals. Her face appeared as the full moon. Her auspicious dress and features were the repositories of all graceful charms. Her neck had the shape of the conchshell. Her eyes were wide and her ears shone exquisitely. On either side, her long-rounded arms resembling a lotus-stalk shone beautifully. Her two breasts resembling lotus-buds were stout, plump and firm. Her waist was slender and the curly locks of her hair shone well. Her feet resembled the land-lotus and were comely in appearance. She was competent to shake the minds of even the sages deeply engrossed in meditation, even at the very sight. She was a crest-jewel of all the maidens in the world.

11-12. On seeing her in that exquisite form as increased the pleasure and love of even those who meditate, the great Yogin Śiva closed His eyes immediately and meditated upon His real form, the great principle that is beyond the three attributes and is imperishable.

13-14. On seeing Śiva the lord of all, the chief of those devoted to penance, the lord with the moon as his ornament, who can be known through spiritual insight and who was sitting in the meditative posture closing His eyes, Himācala saluted Him again. Though he was not disheartened, he entertained some doubts. Thus he, the lord of mountains, foremost of the eloqueut, spoke to Śiva, the sole kinsman of the universe.

Himācala said:—

15. O great lord of the gods, O Śiva, the merciful, O lord, open your eyes and look at me who have sought refuge in you.

16. O Śiva, O great lord, the delighter of the universe,

O great God, I bow to you who destroy all adversities.

17. O lord of gods, the Vedas and the sacred lore do not know you entirely. Your greatness is beyond the sphere of words and minds, inexpressible by means of words and incomprehensible.

18. Not to speak of others, even the Vedas describe you with awe and timidity not positively but negating what you are not.

19. Securing your grace through devotion, many devotees become acquainted with you. Seeking refuge in you they get correct knowledge about your real self.

20. Please listen to my entreaty with a long heart. I am your slave. O dear lord, in humility I shall explain the same to you.

21. O great god Śiva, by your favour I feel most fortunate. O lord, consider me your slave and be sympathetic towards me. Obeisance to you.

22. O lord, I shall be visiting you daily along with my daughter. O lord, be pleased to command me accordingly.

Brahmā said:—

23. On hearing his words, the great lord of the gods broke His meditation, opened His eyes, thought a little and spoke.

Lord Śiva said:—

24. "O mountain, you shall come every day to see me, leaving your daughter in your abode. Otherwise I cannot be seen"

Brahmā said :—

25. On hearing the words of Śiva in that view, the father of Śivā the mountain, bowed his head and replied to Śiva.

Himācala said:—

26. "Let this be kindly mentioned why this girl cannot accompany me here. Is she unworthy of your service ? I do not know the reason thereof."

Brahmā said:—

27. Particularly pointing out the worldly conduct of fake ascetics, the bull-bannered god Śiva laughingly spoke to the mountain.

Śiva said:—

28. This auspicious slender-bodied maiden of comely hips and moon-like face should not be brought near me. I forbid you again and again.

29. A woman is a phase of illusion. As the scholars who have mastered the Vedas say particularly, a young damsel is a hindrance to ascetics.

30. O mountain, I am an ascetic, a yogin, never affected by illusion. Of what avail is a woman thrust on me?

31. O friend resorted to by great ascetics, you shall not say so again, since you are an adept in Vedic religion, a scholar and one foremost among the wise.

32. O mountain, by contact with a woman, worldliness springs up; non-attachment perishes and the virtuous penance is destroyed.

33. Hence, O mountain, no ascetic shall have any truck with women. A woman is the root of all worldly attachments. She destroys all wisdom and detachment together.

Brahmā said:—

34. Speaking these and many other similar things to the lord of mountains, lord Śiva the great Yogin, stopped.

35. On hearing these ruthless words of Śiva free from sickness and desire, the father of Pārvatī became nervous, O celestial sage, and a little agitated. But he kept quiet.

36. On hearing the words of the ascetic and finding her father, the lord of the mountains, frightened, Pārvatī bowed to Śiva and spoke these words clearly.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

(*Śiva-Pārvatī dialogue*)

Pārvatī said:—

1. O Yogin, O lord, wise and clever, please listen to the reply to what you, as an ascetic, said to the lord of mountains.

2. O Śiva, you perform this great penance because you possess the energy of penance. Your intellect is inclined to perform penance because you are a noble soul.

3. That energy is the Prakṛti, the cause of all activities. Everything is created, sustained and destroyed by it.

4. O lord, please ponder over who you are and who this subtle Prakṛti is. Without Prakṛti how can the great lord of the phallic form exist ?

5. You are worthy of the worship, respect and meditation of all living beings for ever, thanks to Prakṛti. Thinking of this in your heart, please reply.

Brahmā said:—

6. On hearing these words of Pārvati, the great lord engaged in the causation of great enjoyment and protection became delighted. He laughed and said.

The great lord said:—

7. I am destroying the Prakṛtī with my great penance. I remain in reality without Prakṛti.

8. Indeed Prakṛti should not be taken in by good people. They should remain unaffected eschewing all worldly conduct.

Brahmā said:—

9. O dear one, this was said by Śiva in accordance with worldly conventions and dealings. Pārvatī thereupon laughed to herself and spoke these sweet words.

Pārvatī said .—

10. O Yogin, O lord Śiva, based on what you said

how can that Prakṛti cease to exist and how can you be considered beyond that Prakṛti ?

11. You shall ponder over this and say with reference to the facts as they are. All these (the universe etc) are bound by Prakṛti continuously.

12. Hence you shall not say anything, not do anything. Know that speaking, doing etc. is a Prākṛta activity.

13. What you hear, what you eat, what you see and what you do—all these are (essentially) the activities of Prakṛti. To say that it is unreal is meaningless.

14. O lord, if you are greater than Prakṛti, wherefore do you perform penance, O Śiva, now, on this mountain Himavat.

15. O Śiva, you have been swallowed by Prakṛti, you do not know your own situation. O lord, if you do not know your own situation why do you perform penance ?

16. O yogin, what have I to do with an argument with you ? Scholars say that without perception inference has no authority at all.

17. As long as the embodied beings remain the objects of the sense-organs, everything is Prākṛta. Wise men consider it so.

18. O lord of ascetics, a longwinded talk is of no avail. Listen to my emphatic statement. I am Prakṛti and you are Puruṣa. This is the truth. There is no doubt about it.

19. With my blessings you become qualitative and embodied. Without me, you are attributeless and incompetent to perform any activity.

20. Being always subservient to Prakṛti you perform all activities. Self-controlled, free from aberrations and untainted by me how can you perform them ?

21. If you are really superior to Prakṛi, if what you say is true, you need not be afraid to be near me, O Śiva.

Brahmā said:—

22. On hearing these words of Pārvatī based on the Sāṁkhya system, Śiva replied to her, upholding the Vedāntin's point of view.

Lord Śiva said:—

23. O Pārvatī, O upholder of the Sāṁkhya system, if you say so, O sweet-voiced lady, you render me unforbidden service every day.

24. If I am the Brahman, the supreme lord, unsullied by illusion. comprehensible through spiritual knowledge and the master of illusion what will you do then ?

Brahmā said :—

25. Having spoken to Pārvatī thus, the lord, the conciliator and the blesser of the devotees spoke to the mountain thus.

Śiva said :—

26. O lord of mountains, here itself on your beautiful excellent ridge, I shall perform my penance showing to the world my real blissful form and nature.

27. O lord of mountains, permission shall be given to me to perform penance. Without your permission it is not possible for me (or any one else) to perform any penance here.

Brahmā said :—

28. On hearing these words of Śiva, the lord of gods, Himavat bowed to Śiva and said.

Himavat said :—

29. The entire universe consisting of gods, Asuras and human beings, is yours. O great god, though insignificant, I blabber something to you.

Brahmā said:—

30. Thus addressed by Himavat, Śiva, the benefactor of the worlds, laughingly permitted him to go.

31. Permitted by Śiva, Himavat returned to his abode along with Pārvatī. He wanted to visit Him daily.

32. Even without her father but accompanied by her maids, Pārvatī approached Śiva everyday for serving Him with devotion.

33. O dear, at the bidding of lord Śiva, none of the

Gaṇas, Nandīśvara and others, purely carrying out the orders of Śiva, prevented her.

34. The discourse of Śivā and Śiva who represented the principles of Sāṁkhya and Vedānta and who, if thoughtfully considerd, are not different from each other, was very happy, and pleasing for ever.

35. At the request of the lord of mountains, Śiva permitted Pārvatī to remain with Him being true to His words though with all gravity and seriousness.

36. He, the lord of individual souls, said to Pārvatī in the company of her maids—"You can serve me everyday You can go (as you please). You can stay here fearlessly."

37. Saying this, He accepted the goddess in his service. Śiva is free from aberrations. He is a great Yogin, the lord who indulges in different kinds of divine sports.

38. This is the supreme courage of great ascetics possessed of fortitude that though surrounded by obstacles they are not overpowered by them.

39. Then, the lord of mountains, returned to his city and rejoiced in the company of his wife, the sages and attendants.

40. Śiva mentioned the Yoga of meditation on the great Ātman with His mind freed from obstacles.

41. Pārvatī, along with her maids, continued her daily service to the moon-crested lord, coming and going without any hindrance.

42. She washed Śiva's feet and drank that holy water. With a cloth heated in fire she wiped his body.

43. After worshipping Him with sixteen types of offerings duly, and bowing to Him repeatedly she used to return to her father's abode.

44. O excellent sage, a long time elapsed as she continued her service to Him who was engrossed in meditation.

45. Sometimes accompanied by her maids, she sang exquisite songs of good note that increased love in the hermitage of Śiva.

46. Sometimes she brought Kuśa grass, flowers and sacrificial twigs. Sometimes, assisted by her maids, she scubbed and cleaned the place.

47. Sometimes she stayed in the house of the moon-cre-

scent lord, pure and holy. Sometimes she used to gaze at the lord lovingly and with surprise.

48-49 In the course of his penance sometimes the lord of the goblins thought about her as free from attachment. But as she was in her physical form He did not take her as His wife though she was near Him, though she was endowed with every feature of beauty, though she was capable of deluding even the sages.

50. On seeing her with perfect control over her sense-organs and engrossed in serving Him always, the lord mercifully thought.

51. "I shall take her only when the last seed of ego goes away from her; when she herself performs a penance."

52. Thinking thus, the lord of the Bhūtas reverted to meditation. The lord who could indulge in great sports became a great Yogin.

53. O sage, when Śiva, the great Ātman, sank into meditation, no other thought entered His mind.

54. As for pārvatī, she served Him everyday with great devotion, always thinking on the form of that Great Soul.

55. Śiva who was engrossed in meditation saw her every day in full composure. Forgetting His previous thoughts about her, He did not see her although He saw her.

56. In the mean time Indra, other gods and the sages eagerly sent Kāma there at the bidding of Brahmā.

57. They had been harassed by the demon Tāraka. the demon of great strength. Hence they wanted to unite Parvatī and Śiva in love.

58. After reaching there Kāma tried all his tricks but Śiva was not at all agitated. He reduced Kāma to ashes.

59. O sage, Pārvatī too was divested of her ego. At his bidding she performed a penance and obtained Him as her husband.

60. Pārvatī and Śiva were very happy. Engrossed in helping others they carried out the work of the gods.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

(*The Birth of Tāraka and Vajrāṅga and their Penance*)

Nārada said:—

1. O Brahmā, great devotee of Śiva and disciple of Viṣṇu, this great story of Śivā and Śiva has been narrated very well by you.

2. Who was this Tāraka demon, O Brahmā, by whom the gods were harassed. Whose son was he ? Narrate his story with reference to Śiva.

3. How did Śiva of full control reduce Kāma to ashes ? Please narrate that too with pleasure. The story of the lord is indeed wonderful.

4. How did Śivā perform the severe penance for the sake of happiness ? How did the primordial energy who is greater than the universe secure Śiva as her husband ?

5. O great scholar, narrate all these complete in every detail to me, your son, who has dedicated his soul to Śiva and who has developed full faith in Him.

Brahmā said:—

6. O celestial sage, of great intellect, O foremost of my sons, whose sacred rites are laudable, I explain the entire story after thinking on Śiva. Listen.

7. O Nārada, first of all, you hear the birth of Tāraka himself, to secure whose death great effort was made by the gods depending on Śiva.

8. My son Marīci begot Kaśyapa who married thirteen daughters of Dakṣa.

9. The eldest of them Diti bore two sons: Hiraṇyakaśipu the elder and Hiraṇyākṣa the younger.

10. When these two began to harass the gods, Viṣṇu assumed the forms of Man-lion and Boar and killed them. Then the gods became fearless and happy.

11. The distressed Diti sought refuge in Kaśyapa and and serving him with devotion and observing the sacred rites she conceived.

12. On coming to know of it, Indra entered her womb forcibly and cut it off many a time with his thunderbolt.

13. By the power of her sacred rites, the child in the womb did not die as she was sleeping at that time, by a stroke of good luck. They were cut into seven pieces and so she had seven sons.

14. These sons became gods by the name of Maruts. They all went to heaven along with Indra and were taken as his own attendants by the king of gods.

15. Diti resorted again to her husband repenting for her action. She made the sage pleased by means of great service.

Kaśyapa said:—

16. Be pure and perform penance for ten thousand years of Brahmā. When it is completed you will have a son.

17. O sage, the penance was completed by Diti who performed it with faith. Thereafter from him she conceived and delivered of a son.

18. That son of Diti named Vajrāṅga (of adamantine limbs) was on a par with the gods. Befitting his name, his body was strong and powerful even from his very birth.

19. At the bidding of his mother, he immediately abducted Indra, the lord of gods, the other gods and punished them in various ways.

20. Seeing the distress of Indra and others, Diti became very happy. Indra and other gods became miserable due to their own actions.

21. Always engaged in the welfare of the gods, I went there accompanied by Kaśyapa. Employing gentle and peaceful words I got the gods released.

22. Releasing the gods with respect, Vajrāṅga, a great devotee of Śiva, was delighted in his heart, and he of pure soul, without any aberration, spoke.

Vajrāṅga said:—

23. In order to achieve his interest, Indra killed the foetus of my mother. He has now tasted the fruit thereof. Well may he rule over his kingdom.

24. O Brahmā, I did this only at the bidding of my mother. I have no desire for the enjoyments of any one of the worlds.

25. O Brahmā, foremost of those who know the Vedas, tell me the essence of real philosophy whereby I can ever remain happy, pleased in heart and free from aberrations.

26. On hearing that, O sage, I said—"Sāttvika feelings constitute the essence of real philosophy. I shall lovingly create an exquisite lady."

27. After offering her who was named Varāṅgī, to that son of Diti, I went to my abode in great delight. So also Kaśyapa, his father.

28. Thereafter the demon eschewed his diabolical feelings and resorted to sublime thoughts. Since he was free from fiendish feelings he became happy.

29. But no sublime feeling entered in the heart of Varāṅgī. With chastity and faith she served her husband lovingly in diverse ways.

30. Her husband Vajrāṅga of great lordly status was glad very soon on account of her service . He then spoke thus:—

Vajrāṅga said:—

31. O beloved, what do you wish ? What is it that you cherish in your mind ? On hearing that, she bowed to her husband and revealed her desire.

Varāṅgī said:—

32. "O my good husband, if you are so pleased grant me a powerful son who will conquer three worlds and cause misery to Viṣṇu."

Brahmā said :—

33. On hearing the words of his beloved, he was disagreeably surprised and vexed. He was free from inimical thoughts. With perfect wisdom and Sāttvika feelings in his heart he said :—

34. My beloved wishes enmity with the gods. It does not appeal to me. What shall I do? Where shall I go ? How can my vow be preserved from destruction ?

35. If my wife's wishes are fulfilled, the three worlds will be much distressed, so too the gods and the sages.

36. If my beloved's desires are not fulfilled, I am sure

to be cast into hell. In either case righteousness will be lost. This is what we have heard.

37. O sage, thus Vajrāṅga whirled a lot in a dilemma. Intelligently he considered the corresponding strength and weakness of both the alternatives.

38. O sage, as willed by Śiva, though intelligent the king of demons agreed to the proposal. He told his wife "So be it."

39. For that purpose he performed another very difficult penance with great zeal with me as the object of worship, for number of years.

40. On seeing the great penance I went to him for granting the boon. With a delighted mind I told him "speak out the boon you wish to have."

41. On seeing me in the firmament in the pleasant mood he worshipped and eulogised me as well as craved for the boon as desired by his wife.

Vajrāṅga said :—

42. O lord, give me a son who will be carrying out what is beneficent to his mother, who will be strong, valorous and efficient, who will be a storehouse of penance.

Brahmā said :—

43. On hearing his words, O sage, I said "So be it." After granting the boon I returned to my abode thinking on Śiva, though a bit distressed.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

(*The penance and reign of Tārakāsura*)

Brahmā said:—

1. Then that Varāṅgī, devoted to him, conceived. The child within her body developed in many years with its brilliance.

2. That Varāṅgī, when the time was complete, delivered of a son of huge body and great strength dazzling the ten quarters.

3. At the same time, several phenomena of evil portent forboding misery and distress happened, when the son of Varāṅgī was born making the gods miserable.

4. O dear, the phenomena of three varieties indicating great calamity and terrifying the worlds occurred in the sky, heaven and earth. I shall narrate them.

5. With a terrifying noise, thunderbolts fell along with comets; shooting meteors rose up, making the world miserable.

6. The earth with all the mountains quaked; the quarters blazed; the rivers and oceans were particularly agitated.

7. The rough wind blew with a hissing noise. Gusts of wind with troops of tempests and dust for banner uprooted several trees.

8. O great brahmin, the misty haloes around the sun and the moon in the grip of Rāhu became the harbingers of great fear and unhappiness.

9 At that time terrifying sounds that resembled those of the chariot issued forth from cracks and crevices in the mountains.

10. Within villages, inauspicious vixens howled hideously vomitting fires; as it were, through their mouths along with the hissing and twanging sounds of the hootings and howlings of owls and jackals.

11. Lifting up their necks, the dogs barked in diverse ways producing sounds of singing or lamenting here and there.

12. O dear, groups of mad asses ran here and there braying loudly and digging the ground with their hoofs.

13. Terrified by the asses, birds flew up from their nests. In their excitement and flutter they honked and cronked. They did not find a peaceful perch anywhere.

14. Beasts in sheds and forests roamed here and there in great fright as though beaten and driven about, passing urine and shitting dungs as they pleased.

15. Frightened cows sprayed blood through their udders; their eyes brimmed with tears, clouds showering putrid matter became terrifying.

16. Idols and images of deities appeared to cry and fly up. Even when there was no gale, trees fell down. Planets in the sky clashed with one another.

17. O excellent sage, these and similar portending phenomena occurred : Ignorant persons thought the submersion of the whole universe was imminent.

18. Then Kaśyapa Prajāpati thought well and named the powerful demon Tāraka.

19. That heroic demon, with his manliness and valour manifesting quickly grew and developed with his steely frame like the lord of mountains.

20. Then the demon Tāraka, of great strength and exploit, endowed with a lofty mind, requested permission of his mother for performing penance.

21. The permission having been secured, that demon possessing great power of illusion and capable of deluding even experts in the magical art, thought of performing penance in order to conquer all the gods.

22. Strictly adhering to the directions of his elders and preceptors he went to the forest of Madhu and performed a severe penance duly, having Brahmā as his objective.

23. For a hundred years he performed penance with his hands lifted up, standing on only one leg and gazing at the sun. With his mind steady and firm he observed all sacred rites.

24. Then for a hundred years, the lord and king of Asuras, Tāraka performed the penance : stood steady touching the ground with the single big toe.

25. For hundred years he performed penance by drinking only water; another hundred years by sustaining himself on air alone, another hundred years standing in water and another hundred years standing on dry land.

26. A hundred years he performed the penance amidst fires, a hundred years in a topsy-turvy position and a hundred years supported on the ground by the palms of his hands.

27. O sage, a hundred years he remained with his head down and feet up clinging fast to the branch of a tree and inhaling the pure smoke of the sacrificial fire.

28. Thus with ardour, the king of the demons performed the severe penance duly unbearable even to those who heard about it.

29. O sage, in the process of such a penance, a huge

mass of light shot up from his head and spread all round. It caused great havoc.

30. All the worlds of the gods were well nigh consumed by it alone. O sage, all the celestial sages were hard hit and distressed.

31-32. Indra, the lord of gods, was extremely terrified. He thought "Some one is performing a penance. Surely he will usurp my position. This master mind shall in a trice destroy the whole cosmos". All those who entertained similar doubts could not decide what to do.

33. Then all those gods and sages consulted one another and in their great fright they came to my world and approached me in a piteous plight.

34. Bowing to and eulogising me with palms joined in reverence, all of them explained everything to me distressed in mind that they were.

35. Coming to a definite conclusion with adequate thought as to the reason for the same, I went where the demon was performing penance in order to grant him the boon.

36. O sage, I told him thus— "Tell me what boon you want. A severe penance has been performed by you. There is nothing which cannot be granted to you".

37. On hearing these words of mine, Tāraka, the great demon, bowed and eulogised me and requested for a terrible boon.

Tāraka said :—

38. "O Pitāmaha, if you are glad and ready to grant me the boon what is it that cannot be achieved by me? Hence I request you for this boon. Please listen.

39. O lord of gods, if you are pleased and if a boon is to be given to me, be kind enough to grant me two boons.

40. O great lord, there should certainly be no man equal to me in strength in this entire universe created by you.

41. If a son born of Śiva becomes the commander-in-chief of an army and discharges weapons against me, let my death occur then".

42. O excellent sage, thus requested by that demon, I granted him two boons and hastened back to my abode.

43. Securing the excellent boon in accordance with his cherished desire, the demon was very glad and went to the town Śoṇita[23].

44. That great demon was crowned the king of the three worlds with the permission of Śukra, the preceptor of the demons.

45. Then the great demon became the leader of the three worlds. He inaugurated his commanding position by harassing the mobile and immobile beings.

46. He duly established his suzerainty over the three worlds. He protected his subjects but inflicted pain on the gods and others.

47. Then the demon Tāraka seized gems and jewels of all the guardians of the quarters, Indra and others, offered under duress by them on being afraid of him.

48. Afraid of him, Indra surrendered his Airāvata (white elephant) and Kubera all his nine treasures.

49. White horses were surrendered by Varuṇa, the wish-yielding cow Kāmadhenu by the sages, and the sun out of fear for him surrenderad his divine horse Uccaiḥśravas.

50. Wherever a fine article was espied by the demon, he seized it immediately. The three worlds became void of all valuable things.

51. O sage, the oceans tho offered him their gems on account of fear. The entire earth became exuberant in productivity without being tilled and yielded what his subjects desired.

52. The sun glowed gently and mildly as not to make him distressed. The moon was always visible with his brillant light and the wind blew always favouring him.

53. Whatever riches the gods possessed or the manes or others had, were forfeited by the wicked demon.

54. Bringing the three worlds under his control, he declared Indra himself. He became the undisputed lord and ruled over them with perfect self-control.

23. It was the capital of the Asura territory, later on called Bāṇapura, as it was ruled by the powerful Asura Bāṇa, the devotee of Śiva. According to Dey (G. D. PP. 21, 189) Śoṇitapura is still called by that name, and is situated in Kamaun on the bank of the river Kedāra-Gaṅgā or Mandākinī about 6 miles from Uṣāmaṭha at a short distance from Guptakāśī".

55. Dismissing the gods he installed demons in their places. Some gods he engaged in his personal service.

56. O sage, the gods harassed by him, led by Indra, sought refuge in me. They were helpless and extremely agitated.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

(Brahmā consoles the gods harassed and frightened by the demon Tāraka)

Brahmā said :—

1. The gods terribly tormented by Tāraka, bowed to and eulogised me, the lord of subjects with great devotion.

2. On hearing the eulogy of the gods pleasing and true to facts I was highly pleased and replied to the heaven-dwellers thus.

3. O gods, welcome to you. I hope you are all fulfilling your duties without obstacles. Why have you all come here? Tell me.

4. On hearing my words those gods bowed to me duly and spoke. Being tormented by Tāraka they were in a piteous plight.

The gods said :—

5. O lord of the worlds, thanks to the boon received from you. The demon Tāraka is very haughty. Driving us out with force he has taken possession of our positions.

6. Is it not known to you what misery has befallen us? Please dispel our misery quickly. We seek refuge in you.

7. He torments us wherever we happen to stay by day or at night. Wherever we flee we see Tāraka.

8. O dear, lord of all, we are extremely harassed and agitated due to Tāraka.

9. Agni, Yama, Varuṇa, Nirṛti, Vāyu and other guardians of the deities are under his control.

10. None of them is ever independent. All serve him in the manner of human beings accompanied by their followers.

11. Being harassed by him, the gods have become subservient of him. They are engaged in carrying out his wishes. All of us are his servants.

12. Our woman folk, the groups of heavenly nymphs have been captured by Tāraka, the powerful.

13. No sacrifice is in the making. No ascetic is in penances. The charitable and virtuous activities are being seldom pursued in the worlds.

14. His commander-in-chief is a simple demon-Krauñca. He has now gone to the nether worlds and is harassing the people very much.

15. The regions of our three worlds have been forcibly taken, O Brahamā, by this Tāraka of sinful and ruthless temperament.

16. O lord of the worlds, we were in heaven but now that we have been turned out by that demon we shall go to any place which you may kindly suggest.

17. You are our final resort. You are our ruler, creator, and protector. But we are scorched in the fire of the name Tāraka. We are extremely agitated.

18. Our ruthless activities against him have turned out to be weak and ineffective, even as medicinal herbs of great potency are rendered ineffective in an ailment brought about by the combination of all deranged humours.

19. We had some hope of victory in Sudarśana the discus of Viṣṇu. But even that discus has become ineffective in his neck where it has fallen as though it were a floral offering to a deity.

Brahmā said :—

20. O sage, on hearing these words of the gods, I told them befitting the occasion.

21. "O gods, the demon Tāraka has flourished, thanks to my words of blessings. His destruction through me does not seem proper.

22. Improper is the destruction through that source wherefrom he has flourished. Even a poisonous tree tended and

nurtured by one cannot be cut and felled down by oneself.[24]

23. Śiva is the most suitable agent to carry out your task. But I myself cannot do anything remedial in this case.

24. Tāraka will be destroyed by his own sin. How that shall be done you know from me. I shall advise you.

25. Thanks to the power of the boon granted by me. Tāraka cannot be killed by me or by Viṣṇu or by Śiva or by any one of the gods. It is true.

26. O gods, if there is a son born of Śiva, he alone can kill the demon Tāraka.

27. O best of gods, you carry out the remedy I am suggesting. By the grace of lord Śiva, it can be successfully accomplished.

28. Satī, the daughter of Dakṣa, formerly cast off her body. She is now born of Menakā's womb. That event is already known to you all.

29. O gods, it is certain that lord Śiva will marry her. Still you shall pursue your endeavour.

30. Make such arrangements as to ensure the discharge of semen into Pārvatī, the daughter of Menakā.

31. Śiva is a great Yogin who can make semen flow upwards in the body. Only Pārvatī can make him discharge the semen downwards, out of the body. There is no other woman capable of it.

32. That daughter of the lord of the mountains is now in her prime of youth. She is serving Śiva in his penance on the Himālayas.

33. As a result of the tenacious pleadings of her father, she is serving Him in meditation.

34. She is the most beautiful lady in the three worlds. She stands in front of Him and worships Him. Still lord Śiva who is engrossed in His meditation is not distracted by her presence.

35. It is your duty to ascertain means to make Him desire Pārvatī for His wife. O gods, do something in that direction very quickly.

36. I shall go to the demon's abode and try to dissuade him from his obstinacy. O gods, you can go to your abode

24 For the similarity of idea and verbal expression, cp. Kālidāsa's Kumāra.

37. After saying thus to the gods I hastened to the demon Tāraka. I addressed him thus.

Brahmā said:—

38. You are ruling over our heaven which contains the essence of all brilliance. You are desirous of getting more than what you bargained for at the time of your penance.

39. I granted you a boon but not the kingdom of heaven. Hence leave off this region. You can rule over the earth.

40. O best of Asuras, even there you can achieve the fruit of your activities as here in Devaloka. There is nothing to hesitate in this matter.

41. After thus exhorting the demon to leave off heaven I, the lord of all, remembered Śiva and Śivā and vanished from the scene.

42. Leaving the heaven, Tāraka descended to the earth. Stationed in the town Śoṇita, he ruled over the entire kingdom.

43. On hearing my words, the gods bowed to me and went to Indra's abode. They were duly received by Indra.

44. After reaching there and consulting one another, the gods in a body lovingly told Indra.

The gods said :—

45. "O lord, you should carry out the suggestions of Brahmā and see that Śiva is lovingly inclined towards Śivā.

Brahmā said :—

46. After explaining every thing to the lord, the gods went in all directions to their respective abodes with great pleasure.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

(The dialogue between Indra and Kāmadeva)

Brahmā said :—

1. When the gods had gone, Indra remembered Kāma. He was so afflicted by Tāraka, the wicked demon.

2. In an instant, Kāma, the lover of Rati, came there along with Vasanta. He was accompanied by Rati too. Being powerful enough to conquer the three worlds he was very haughty.

3. Making due obeisance standing in front of Indra, the lofty-minded Kāma joined his palms in reverence and said :—

Kāma said :—

4. "What is the matter that has cropped up now? Wherefore was I remembered? Please tell me. I am here to carry it out".

Brahmā said :—

5. On hearing the words of Kāma, Indra, the lord of the gods, said praising him lovingly saying "well done, very proper".

Indra said :—

6. O Kāma you are blessed indeed, since you are in readiness to carry out the affair I have on hand. You have begun well.

7. Listen to what is relevant to the context. I shall tell you everything. My job is equally your job and not otherwise.

8. I have many friends and great friends at that. But, O Kāma, I have no other friend on a par with you anywhere.

9. O dear, for my conquest, the unparallelled thunderbolt has been made. Even that weapon may sometimes be ineffective but you are never so.

10. Who can be dearer than the person from whom

one derives benefit ? Hence you, my greatest friend, must carry out my task.

11. Time being accursed, a great irremediable misery has befallen me. None other than you can dispel it.

12. The test of a donor is at the time of famine; the test of a warrior is at the time of battle; the test of a friend is at the time of adversity and the test of a woman is in the financial weakness of the family.

13. O dear, the test of a real friend is in the time of distress and is also based on what he does behind the back. It is not otherwise. This is truth.

14. Now that an adversity has befallen me, which cannot be thwarted by anyone else, O dear friend, it shall be a test for you today.

15. This is not a matter that brings pleasure to me alone. This is a matter that concerns all the gods and others too.

Brahmā said :—

16. On hearing these words of Indra the fish-bannered god Kāma spoke smilingly in words indicating love and gravity.

Kāma said :—

17. Why do you say like this ? I make no answer to you. A helping unreal friend is neither seen nor spoken of in the world.

18. He who speaks much at the time of adversity will not turn out much. Yet, O king, my lord, I shall say something. Please listen.

19. O dear friend, I shall cause the downfall of that enemy of yours who is performing a severe penance to usurp your position.

20. I shall topple gods, sages, demons and others through the side-glances of a beautiful woman. I do not at all take human beings into consideration.

21. Let your thunderbolt and other weapons of innumerable varieties be set aside. What will they do when I, your friend, am present ?

22. I can undoubtedly make Brahmā and Viṣṇu go

astray. Others are of no consideration. I shall make even Śiva fall.

23. I have only five arrows that are soft and flowery. My bow is of three types. That too is flowery. The bow-string consists of bees.

24. My support and strength is my beloved wife Ratī Spring is my minister. O god, I am having five forces. The moon, the storehouse of nectar, is my friend.

25. The sentiment of love is my commander-in-chief. The coquettish gestures and emotions are my soldiers. All these are soft and gentle. O Indra, I too am of that sort.

26. An intelligent man shall put together things that are mutually complementary. You shall therefore engage me in a task that accords with my capacity.

Brahmā said :—

27. On hearing his words, Indra was much pleased. Pleasing Kāma, the bestower of cherished happiness, by means of his words, he spoke.

Indra said :—

28. O dear Kāma, you are competent to carry out the task which I have conceived in my mind. It cannot be realised through anyone else.

29. O Kāma, foremost among my friends, listen. I shall explain truly for what I remembered you and desired your presence, O Kāma.

30. Securing a wonderful boon from Brahmā, the great demon Tāraka has become invincible and a pest for everyone.

31. The entire world is harassed by him. Many virtuous rites are destroyed. The gods have become miserable and so also the sages.

32. He had been fought by the gods to the utmost of their ability formerly. But the weapons of all the gods became quite futile.

33. The noose of Varuṇa, the god of waters, snapped. When hurled at his neck by Viṣṇu, the discus Sudarśana was blunted.

34. The death of this wicked demon has been foretold

by Brahmā, the lord of the people, at the hands of the boy born of Śiva. the great Yogin.

35. O dear friend, this task must be achieved by you diligently. Then we, the gods, can be very happy.

36. It will be beneficent to me. It will render the whole world happy. Realising the duties of a friend you are now to act.

37. Śiva is at present engaged in a great penance. The supreme lord is always independent. It is not to achieve any desire that He performs the penance.

38. For the sake of gods, at the bidding of her father, Pārvatī is attending on Him, I hear.

39. O Kāma, you shall certainly do everything necessary to bring about an interest in her in the mind of Śiva who has self-control.

40. You will become contented after this. Your miseries will be destroyed. Your exploit will be permanently established in the world. Not otherwise.

Brahmā said :—

41. On being thus addressed, Kāma was glad, his face beaming like a full blown lotus. He lovingly said to the lord of gods, "I shall undoubtedly do it."

42-43. After saying this when he said "So be it" he said "yes." Kāma accepted it because he was deluded by Śiva's illusion. Accompanied by his wife and Spring he went to the place where Śiva, the Yogin, was performing penance.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

(*Description of the perturbation caused by Kāma*)

Brahmā said:—

1. After going there, the haughty Kāma, deluded by Śiva's magic power, stationed himself, after first spreading the enchanting power of Spring all around.

2. The enchanting influence of Spring spread every-

where around Oṣadhiprastha, the penance-grove of Śiva, the supreme lord, O excellent sage.

3. O great sage, the groves bloomed with special exuberance, O excellent sage, due to his power.

4. The fragrant flowers of Mango and Aśoka trees shone heightening feelings of love.

5. The water lilies with bees hovering on them proved to be the causes for the rise of love in the minds of everyone.

6. The sweet cooings of the cuckoos heightened emotions of love. They were exquisite and pleasing to the mind.

7. O sage, diverse sounds of the hummings of the bees rang sweet in the ears of everyone heightening temptations of love.

8. The bright light of the moon scattered all around appeared to be the emissary of lovers and their beloveds.

9. At that time the Kāladīpikā (brilliant lamp) induced reticent haughty persons to love. O good sir, the wind blew gently but distressed those who were separated from their beloveds.

10. Thus the vast diffusion of Spring caused the display of emotions of love. It was unbearable to the forest-dwelling sages.

11. O sage, then, even the insentient beings had the emotions of love. What about the state of sentient ones ?

12. Thus spring employed his unbearable power heightening the love of all living beings.

13. On seeing the untimely display of spring, Śiva the lord, who had assumed a physical body indulging in divine sports, thought it surprising.

14. But He, the chief of the self-controlled and the remover of man's misery continued his severe penance.

15. When spring spread everywhere, Kāma accompanied by Rati stood on his left side, with the arrow of mango blossom taken out and kept in readiness.

16. Enchanting all people, he spread his influence. Who was not enchanted on seeing Kāma in the company of Rati ?

17. Thus they initiated their dalliance. The sentiment of love too accompanied by coquettish gestures and

emotions reached the vicinity of Śiva along with his attendants.

18. Kāma, usually stationed within the mind manifested himself outside. But he could not find any vulnerable loop-hole in Śiva whereby he could enter Him.

19. When Kāma did not secure any entry within the great Yogin, he became deluded and frightened much through the magical power of Śiva.

20. Who could gain access to Śiva in meditation, who could fix an eye in his forehead that resembled fire with shooting blazing flames?

21. In the mean time Pārvatī came there along with her two maids and brought various kinds of flowers for Śiva's worship.

22. Certainly Pārvatī had a greater beauty than the most exquisite lady described by people on the earth.

23. When she wore pretty flowers of the season how could her beauty be described even in a hundred years?

24. No sooner did she enter within the proximity of Śiva than He came out of his meditation for a short while.

25. Profiting by that opportune moment, Kāma, by means of his arrow Harṣaṇa delighted the moon-crest god Śiva who was nearby.

26. O sage, in assistance to Kāma, Pārvatī reached the place near Śiva with emotions of love and accompanied by Spring.

27. In order to make the trident-bearing lord take interest in her, Kāma drew his bow very carefully and discharged his flowery arrow on Him.

28. As was her usual practice she approached Śiva, bowed to Him, worshipped Him and stood in front of Him (awaiting further instructions).

29. Pārvatī was stared at by lord Śiva, while she was laying bare some of the limbs bashfully, as is natural to women in such circumstances.

30. Remembering the boon granted to her by Brahmā formerly, O sage, lord Śiva began to describe her limbs joyfully.

Śiva said :—

31. "Is this your face or the moon? Are these your eyes or lotus petals? These two eyebrows are the bows of Kāma of noble soul.

32. Is this your lower lip or Bimba fruit? Is this your nose or the beak of a parrot? Do I hear your voice or the cooing of the cuckoo? Is this your slender waist or the sacrificial altar?

33. How can her gait be described? How can her comely appearance be described? How can the flowers be described? How can the clothes be described?

34. Whatever is graceful and sweet in the creation has been incorporated here. Indeed, all her limbs are exquisite in every respect.

35 How blessed is this Pārvatī of mysteriously wonderful features. There is no other woman equal to her in beauty in the three worlds.

36. She is a storehouse of the finest beauty. She has wondrous beautiful limbs. She is an enchantress of even sages. She increases great happiness."

Brahmā said:—

37. After describing her body again and again, recollecting the boon granted by Brahmā, Śiva stopped.

38. When Śiva put His hand within her garment and moved it, she, as is natural to women, bashfully withdrew and kept aloof.

39. O sage, then Pārvatī smilingly laid bare some parts of her body and cast graceful glances at Him with great pleasure.

40. On seeing these movements and gestures Śiva became fascinated. Lord Śiva indulging in great divine sports spoke these words.

41. "I feel great pleasure on merely seeing her. What pleasure shall I derive by embracing her?"

42. Thinking thus only for a moment, the enlightened Śiva became detached, honoured Pārvatī and spoke.

43. "How wonderful and mysterious is the situation that has arisen! How is it that I have been deluded and fascin-

ated ? Though I am the lord and master, I have been perturbed by Kāma.

44. If I, the master, were to yearn for the touch of a woman's limbs what will not be done by other incompetent and insignificant creatures''.

45. Thus resuming detachment, lord Śiva forbade her sitting on the couch. How can there be a downfall for the great lord Śiva ?

CHAPTER NINETEEN

(*Kāma's destruction by Śiva*)

Nārada said:—

1. O Brahma, the most fortunate one, what happened then ? Be pleased to tell me that story that destroys our sins altogether.

Brahmā said:—

2. O dear one, hear the story of what happened thereafter. Out of love for me I shall recount Śiva's sports that bring about joy.

3. On seeing the dissipation of His courage, lord Śiva, the great Yogin, thought within Himself wondering much.

Śiva said:—

4. How is it that obstacles have cropped up while I am performing the great penance ? Who can be that wicked person who has made my mind highly perturbed ?

5. With love I have described in bad taste another man's woman. I have contravened rules of virtue and transgressed the bounds of the Vedas.

Brahmā said:—

6. After thinking like this, the great Yogin, the goal of the good, surveyed all round, his suspicion having been aroused.

7. He saw Kāma stationed on His left side with his

bow fully drawn and ready to discharge the arrow. Kāma was haughty and so was very senseless.

8. O Nārada, on seeing Kāma in that attitude, instantaneously anger was aroused in lord Śiva, the supreme soul.

9. O sage, standing high up in the air, holding the arrow and the bow, Kāma discharged his arrow, usually unerring on Śiva

10. The infallible weapon became futile on the great lord. The furious weapon calmed down in regard to the great soul, Śiva.

11. Kāma was frightened when his weapon failed. Standing there and seeing lord Śiva, the conqueror of death in front, he trembled.

12. O great sage, when his endeavour became futile, Kāma who was frightened much remembered Indra and all other gods.

13. O great sage, remembered by Kāma, Indra and other gods came there, bowed to and eulogised Śiva.

14. When the gods eulogised thus, a great flame of fire sprang up from the third eye of the infuriated Śiva.

15. That fire originating instantaneouly from the eye in the middle of His forehead blazed with flames shooting up and resembling the fire of final dissolution in refulgence.

16. After shooting up in the sky, it fell on the ground and rolled over the earth all round.

17. Even before the gods had the time to say "Let him be forgiven, let him be excused" it reduced Kāma to ashes.

18. When the heroic Kāma was thus slain, the gods became miserable. In their agitation they lamented much and saying "O what has happened ?" they cried aloud.

19. With pallid face and limbs, the extremely agitated daughter of the king of mountains returned to her palace taking the maids along with her.

20. Due to the misery on account of the death of her husband, Rati fell down unconscious, as if dead.

21. When she regained consciousness after a while, Rati in her great agitation lamented loudly and said:—

Rati said: —

22. "What shall I do ? Where can I go ? What is it

that the gods have done in making my husband a victim thus? They have called him here and destroyed him.

23. O! O! O lord Kāma, dearer to me than my vital airs, O bestower of happiness, what has happened here? Hā, Hā, my dear, my dear!"

Brahmā said:—

24. Lamenting thus and crying out various piteous words she beat with her hands, kicked with her legs and plucked her hairs.

25. O Nārada, on hearing her lamentation even the beasts and residents of the forest, nay all the immobile trees and bushes became miserable.

26. In the meantime Indra and other gods remembered lord Śiva and consoled Rati saying as follows:—

The gods said:—

27. Take some ashes and preserve them. With effort check your fear. The lord will resuscitate your lover. You will regain your lover again.

28. There is none who gives us happiness or misery. All enjoy and experience the fruit of what they do. In vain do you curse the gods.

Brahmā said :—

29. After consoling Rati thus, all the gods approached Śiva and propitiated Him. With great devotion they spoke these words to Him.

The gods said :—

30. O lord, O great god, favourably disposed to those who seek refuge in you, be pleased to listen to these well intended words of ours.

31. O Śiva, be pleased to ponder over the action of Kāma. O lord Śiva, there is no tinge of selfishness in what Kāma has done.

32. O lord, he had been induced to do so by all the gods harassed by the wicked Tāraka. O Śiva, please know that it is not otherwise.

33. O lord, the chaste Rati is lonely and miserable

now. O lord Śiva, she is in great lamentation, O bestower of everything, please console her.

34. If you have finally disposed off Kāma, O Śiva, you are desirous of annihilating all the gods by means of your fury.

35. On seeing the distress of Rati, the gods are almost doomed. Hence you must remove the distress of Rati.

Brahmā said :—

36. On hearing their words, lord Śiva was pleased. He said this to all the gods.

Śiva said :—

37. O gods, O sages, all of you listen attentively to my words. What has happened, thanks to my fury, cannot be altered.

38. The lord Kāma, the husband of Rati, shall remain bodiless till Viṣṇu incarnates as Kṛṣṇa on the earth and marries Rukmiṇī.

39. Kṛṣṇa will beget Kāma in Rukmiṇī when he goes to Dvārakā[25] and begins to procreate children.

40. His name will certainly be Pradyumna. The demon Śambara will abduct the boy at the time of his very birth.

41. After abducting the boy, the great demon, Śambara, will throw him in the sea. The foolish fellow will take him for dead and will return to his city.

42. O Rati, you shall stay in his city till then. There alone you will get back your husband Pradyumna.

43. Kāma in the name of Pradyumna will regain his wife after killing Śambara in a battle. O gods, he will be happy thereafter.

44. After taking all the valuable properties of Śambara, O gods, he will go to the city again along with her. These words of mine are true.

Brahmā said —

45. On hearing these words of Śiva, the gods heaved a sigh of relief. Joining their palms in reverence and bowing to Him they said :—

25 This town, associated with Lord Kṛṣṇa, is situated in Kathiawar.

The gods said :—

46. "O great god, lord of the gods, O lord, the ocean of mercy, please resuscitate Kāma quickly. O Śiva, save the life of Ratī."

Brahmā said :—

47. On hearing these words of the gods, great God became delighted. The lord of all, the ocean of mercy, spoke again.

Śiva said :—

48. O gods, I am delighted. I shall resuscitate Kāma within myself. He will be one of my Gaṇas and will sport about always.

49. O gods, this story should not be narrated in the presence of any one. All of you return to your abodes. I shall destroy all miseries.

Brahmā said :—

50. After saying this Rudra vanished even as the gods were eulogising Him. The gods became delighted and free from mental suspense.

51. O sage, abiding by the directions of Śiva and consoling Rati by means of the conciliatory words of Śiva, the gods returned to their respective places.

52. O excellent sage, then Rati, the wife of Kāma went to the city and waited for the time mentioned by Śiva.

CHAPTER TWENTY

(*The story of the submarine fire*)

Nārada said :—

1. O Brahmā, please tell me "Where did the flame of fire emerging from the eye of Śiva go ?" Please tell me also the further story of the moon-crested lord.

Brahmā said :—

2. When the fire from the third eye of Śiva reduced

Kāma to ashes it began to blaze all round without burning anything.

3. A huge hue and cry was raised in the three worlds consisting of the mobile and immobile creatures. Immediately the gods and sages sought refuge in me.

4. All of them in their agitation bowed to and eulogised me with their palms joined in reverence and the heads bent down. They intimated to me their grief.

5. On hearing that I pondered over the reason for the same, and remembering Śiva humbly I went there in order to protect the three worlds.

6. That fire, out to burn everything, very brilliant with its shooting flames, was thwarted by me as I had the capacity by Śiva's grace.

7. O sage, then I made that fire of fury, out to burn the three worlds, tender in its blaze and mare-like in shape.

8. Taking that fire mare-like in form, at the will of Śiva, I, the lord of the worlds, went to the sea shore, for the benefit of the worlds.

9. O sage, on seeing me arrived there, the sea took a human form and approached me with palms joined in reverence.

10. Bowing to and duly eulogising me, the grandfather of all the worlds, the ocean said lovingly.

The ocean said :—

11-12. "O Brahmā, the lord of all, why have you come here? Please command me with pleasure knowing me to be your servant". On hearing the words of the ocean I remembered Śiva. I spoke with love in order to benefit the world.

Brahmā said :—

13. O dear, intelligent one, causing the welfare of all the worlds, O ocean, induced by Śiva's will, I shall explain to you.

14. This is the fire of fury of lord Śiva, the great lord. It is in the form of a mare now. After burning Kāma it was about to burn everything.

15. At the will of Śiva I was requested by the gods who were harassed by it, and so I went there and suppressed the fire.

16. I gave it the form of a mare. I have brought it here. O ocean, I ask you to be merciful.

17. This fury of lord Śiva, now in the form of a mare, you will bear till the final dissolution of all living beings.

18. O lord of rivers, when I shall come and stay here, you shall release it. This is Śiva's wonderful fire of fury.

19. His perpetual diet shall consist of your waters. This shall be preserved by you with effort lest it should go down.

20. Thus requested by me, the ocean agreed. None else could have grasped Śiva's fire of fury thus.

21. That fire in the form of a mare entered the ocean and began to consume the currents of water. It blazed with all its shooting flames.

22. O sage, then, delighted in mind I returned to my abode. The ocean of divine form bowed to me and vanished.

23. O great sage, the entire universe, freed from the fear of that fire became normal. The gods and the sages became happy.

CHAPTER TWENTYONE

(*Nārada instructs Pārvatī*)

Nārada said :—

1. O dear Brahmā, O disciple of Viṣṇu, of great intellect, O Creator of three worlds, this is a very wonderful story of the great soul Śiva that has been narrated.

2. When Kāma had been reduced to ashes by the fire from the third eye of Śiva and when that fire had been deposited in the ocean what happened thereafter?

3. What did Goddess Pārvatī, the daughter of the lord

of mountains, do? O storehouse of mercy, please tell me now where she went along with her maids.

Brahmā said :—

4. O dear, of great intellect, listen to the story of the moon-crested lord, my master and the cause of great enjoyment and protection.

5. A wonderfully loud sound arose covering the whole firmament when the fire issuing from Śiva's eye burnt Kāma.

6. On hearing that loud report and seeing Kāma burnt, Pārvatī was terribly frightened and she returned to her abode along with her maids.

7. Himavat along with his attendants and relatives was surprised on hearing that loud report. He was agitated on remembering that his daughter had gone there.

8. On seeing his daughter excessively agitated, the lord of the mountains was sorry. The lord of the mountains approached her gently as she was crying due to her separation from Śiva.

9-10. Approaching her and wiping off her eyes with his hand he said—"Dear daughter, do not be afraid, do not cry. He took her on his lap and consoled her. The lord of the mountains took her immediately to his palace.

11. When Śiva had vanished after burning Kāma, Pārvatī became extremely agitated due to His separation. She did not attain pleasure anywhere.

12. Returning to her father's abode and meeting her mother, Śivā, the daughter of the mountain, considered herself born again.

13. She cursed her own beauty. She said to herself. "O, I am doomed". The daughter of the lord of mountains did not regain composure though consoled and assuaged by the maids.

14. She did not achieve happiness and peace in sleeping, drinking, bathing, or sitting amidst her maids.

15. Remembering the various gestures and movements of Śiva, she muttered to herself ever and anon—"Fie upon my beauty. Fie on my birth and activity".

16. Thus Pārvatī was much distressed in mind due to

separation from Śiva. She did not at all feel happy. She always muttered "Śiva, Śiva."

17. O dear, with her consciousness centred round the Pināka-bearing lord, she continued to stay in the palace of her father. Śiva bewailed much and fainted frequently.

18. The lord of the mountains, Menakā, and their sons chief of whom was Maināka of undisturbed mind, tried to console her but still she did not forget Śiva.

19. O celestial sage, O intelligent one, employed by Indra, the slayer of Bala, you came to Himālaya mountain roaming here and there as you pleased.

20. You were then worshipped by the noble-souled mountain. You enquired of his health and happiness and you were seated in a noble seat.

21. Then the lord of the mountains told you the story of his daughter from her service to Śiva to the burning of Kāma by Him.

22. O sage, on hearing that, you told the lord of the mountains—"Worship Śiva." You stood up, remembered Śiva mentally and took leave of him.

23. O sage, leaving him you hastened to meet Pārvatī secretly, you a favourite of Śiva, perfectly wise and engaged in helping the world.

24. Approaching Pārvatī and addressing her, you spoke to her respectfully. You are foremost among the wise and you were interested in her welfare. Your words were true.

Nārada said: —

25. O Pārvatī, listen. I am sympathetic to you. I shall speak truly. My words will be beneficent to you in all respects. They will lead to the achievement of your desire. They are free from aberrations.

26. The great god has been served by you without austerities. You had some pride which He, the blesser of the distressed, eradicated.

27. O Śivā, after burning Kāma, lord Śiva though favourably disposed to His devotees, left you, since the lord is a great Yogin and so unattached to you.

28. Hence you shall propitiate Him by performing a

great penance. Śiva will take you as His wife, after you have been sanctified by austerities.

29. You will never forsake the auspicious Śiva. O goddess, you will not take any one other than Śiva as your husband.

Brahmā said :—

30. On hearing your words, O sage, Pārvatī, the daughter of the mountain, heaved a sigh of relief and gladly spoke to you with palms joined in reverence.

Pārvatī said:—

31. O sage, O omniscient one, you help all the worlds, please tell me a formula for the propitiation of lord Śiva.

32. No sacred rite will ever fructify without a good preceptor. Truly this eternal statement of the Vedas was heard by me before.

Brahmā said :—

33. On hearing these words of Pārvatī, O excellent sage, you taught her the five-syllabled mantra of Śiva* in accordance with the sacred law.

34. O sage, generating her faith you told her the supreme efficacy of the great formula thus.

Nārada said :—

35. O goddess, listen to the wonderful efficacy of this formula on hearing which Śiva becomes excessively pleased.

36. This formula is a king of all formulas. It yields all cherished desires, bestows all worldly pleasures and salvation, and appeals much to Śiva.

37. Repeating this formula in accordance with the injunctions you shall propitiate Śiva. He will certainly appear before you.

38. O Śivā, meditate on His form, observing all restraints. Repeat the five-syllabled mantra. Śiva will be pleased quickly.

39. O chaste lady, perform the penance thus. Lord

* The five-syllabled Mantra of Śiva : नमः शिवाय

Śiva can be attained through penance. Every one attains the desired fruits in penance and not otherwise.

Brahmā said :—

40. O Nārada, after saying thus to Pārvatī, you, the favourite of Śiva, went to heaven, a casual visitor engaged in the welfare of the gods.

41. O Nārada, on hearing your words and securing the excellent five-syllabled mantra, Pārvatī was extremely pleased.

CHAPTER TWENTYTWO

(Description af Pārvatī's penance)

Brahmā said :—

1. After your departure, O celestial sage, convinced that Śiva could be achieved by means of penance, Pārvatī became glad and decided to perform penance.

2. She took her maids Jayā and Vijayā into confidence and through them made her parents acquainted.

3. First she wanted her father Himavat, the lord of mountains, to hear her humble words.

The maids said :—

4-5. O Himavat, let the words of your daughter be heard through us. She wishes to make her body, beauty and family fruitful. This can be achieved through penance and not otherwise.

6. O excellent mountain, the permission may kindly be given—"Let Pārvatī go to the forest and perform penance there".

Brahmā said:—

7. O excellent sage, thus requested by Pārvatī through the maids, the lord of the mountains carefully considered the proposal and said:

Himācala said:—

8. This appeals to me. I it appeals to Menā as it ought to be, what else can be a better course ?

9. There is no doubt about it that my House will be fortunate. If her mother also likes this, what can be more auspicious than this ?

Brahmā said: —

10. After hearing the words spoken by her father and (in a way) commanded by him, the two maids went to her mother along with her.

11. O Nārada, approaching Pārvatī's mother, they bowed down and with palms joined in reverence they respectfully spoke thus.

The maids said:—

12. O mother, O gentle lady, please listen to the words of your daughter. Obeisance be to you. You will listen with pleasure and act accordingly.

13. For the sake of attaining Śiva, your daughter wishes to perform a severe penance. She has secured the permission of her father. She now wants to seek it from you.

14. O chaste lady, she is desirous of making her beauty fruitful. If your permission too is received, the penance can be performed.

Brahmā said:—

15. O excellent sage, after saying this, the maids became silent. Distressed in mind, Menā did not accept the proposal.

16. Then Pārvatī herself spoke to her mother joining her palms in humility and remembering the lotus-like feet of Śiva.

Pārvatī said:—

17. O mother, I shall be going in the morning for performing penance to achieve Śiva. Please permit me to go to the penance-grove for the task.

Brahmā said:—

18. On hearing the words of her daughter, Menā was distressed. That chaste lady called her daughter near and spoke to her in dejection.

Menā said :—

19. O daughter Śivā, if you are distressed, if you wish to perform penance, you can do it at home. O Pārvatī, do not go out.

20. Where do you wish to go for performing penance ? All the deities are in my house. All the holy centres and the different temples too are here.

21. Do not be stubborn, dear daughter. You shall not go out of your home. What did you achieve when you went out previously? What are you going to achieve at present ?

22. Dear child, slender is your body and hard is the penance. Hence you shall perform penance here. You shall not go out.

23. For a woman to go to a penance-grove for the realisation of her desire is what we have never heard of before. Hence, dear daughter, do not go out for penance.

Brahmā said :—

24. Thus, in various ways, the daughter was dissuaded by her mother. But she did not find any pleasure except in propitiating Śiva.

25. Pārvatī acquired the name Umā since she was prevented from going to forest by Menā and forbidden to perform penance.

26. O sage, on realising that Pārvatī was quite dejected, Menā, the beloved of the mountain, permitted her to perform penance.

27. O excellent sage, on getting permission from her mother, Pārvatī remembered Śiva and felt happy.

28. Bowing to her parents with joy, Pārvatī remembered Śiva and set out for performing penance along with her maids.

29. Discarding all the fine clothes of her taste, she wore tree-barks and the fine girdle of Muñja grass.

30. She eschewed necklace and wore the pure deer skin. She arrived at Gaṅgāvataraṇa[26] for performing penance.

31. The Gaṅgāvataraṇa was in the Himālayan ridge

26. See No. 22, P. 515

where Kāma was burnt by Śiva who was performing meditation.

32. Oh dear, that Himālayan ridge devoid of Śiva was painfully seen by Pārvatī, the mother of the universe, the daughter of the mountain.

33. She stood for a while in the place where formerly Śiva had performed penance and became dispirited by the pangs of separation.

34. Crying aloud "Alas O Śiva" she, the daughter of the mountain, lamented sorrowfully and anxiously.

35. Suppressing the delusion with fortitude after a long time Pārvatī, the daughter of Himavat, got herself initiated for the observance of ritualistic activities.

36. She performed penance in the excellent holy centre Śṛṅgitīrtha which (later) acquired the title "Gaurī-Śikhara[27]" due to her performance of penance thereon.

37. O sage, many beautiful holy plants were laid there by Pārvatī for testing the fruitfulness of her penance.

38. Neatly cleaning the ground, the beautiful lady built the altar. Then the penance, difficult to be performed even by the sages, was begun.

39. Suppressing her sense-organs with her mind, she started the great penance in a place within the proximity.

40. In the summer she kept a perpetually blazing fire all round and remaining within continued muttering the mantra.

41. In the rainy season she continuously remained sitting on the bare ground on the rock and got herself drenched by the downpour of rain.

42. During the winter, with great devotion she remained in water throughout. During snowfall and in the nights too she performed her penance observing fast.

43. Performing such austerities and engrossed in the muttering of the five-syllabled mantra, Pārvatī meditated on Śiva, the bestower of fruits of our cherished desires.

44. Everyday during leisure time she used to water the trees planted by her along with her maids and extended acts of hospitality.

27. It it one of the famous peaks of the Himālayas.

45. Chill gusts of wind, cool showers, and unbearable heat she bore with equanimity.

46. Different sorts of worries she did not mind at all. O sage, fixing her mind in Śiva alone she remained firm and steady.

47. The first year she spent in taking fruits, the second in taking leaves, in the course of her penance. She spent many years thus.

48. Then Śivā, the daughter of Himavat, eschewed even the leaves. She did not take any food. She was engrossed in the performance of penance.

49. Since she, the daughter of Himavat, eschewed leaves from her diet she was called Aparṇā by the gods.

50. Then Pārvatī performed great penance standing on one leg and remembering Śiva, she continued muttering the five-syllabled mantra.

51. Clad in barks of trees, wearing matted hair and eager in the meditation of Śiva, she surpassed even sages by her penance.

52. Pārvatī thus spent three thousand years in the penance-grove performing penance and meditating on lord Śiva.

53. Remaining for a short while in the place where Śiva had performed penance for sixty thousand years, Pārvatī thought like this.

54. Does not the Supreme lord know me observing these ritualistic activities now ? Wherefore am I not followed by him though engaged in penance ?

55. In the Śāstras and the Vedas, lord Śiva is always sung in praise by the sages as the bestower of welfare, omniscient, all-pervading and all-seer.

56. The lord is the bestower of all riches, the moulder of fine emotions, the bestower of the desires of devotees and the remover of their distress.

57. If I am devoted to the bull-bannered lord, discarding all desires, may He be pleased with me.

58. If the mantra of the Nārada Tantra, consisting of five syllables has been continuously repeated by me with great devotion may He be pleased with me.

59. If I am a devotee without aberrations of Śiva, the lord of all, may He be extremely pleased with me.

60. Pondering frequently like this incessantly, she performed penance for a long time, with her face turned downwards, her apparel of bark and mind without any aberrations.

61. She performed penance difficult to be performed even by the sages, so much so that people were struck with surprise.

62. All of them came there to witness her penance. Considering themselves blessed, they proclaimed thus approvingly.

63. "To follow the standard of the virtuous personages is declared to be conducive to greatness. There is no delimitation in penance. Virtue shall be honoured by the wise always.

64. After seeing or hearing about the penance of this lady what penance will be pursued by a man ? A penance greater than this has never been before, nor will it ever be".

65. Saying thus, they praised the penance of Pārvatī and joyously returned to their abodes. Even persons of sturdy countenance praised her penance.

66. O sage, listen to another surprising influence of the penance of Pārvatī, the mother of the universe.

67. Even the naturally inimical beings in and around her hermitage became free from animosity due to her power.

68. Lions and cows prone to the passions of love, hatred etc. ceased to harass one another, thanks to her greatness.

69. O excellent sage, creatures like cats, mice etc. who are born enemies to one another did not exhibit any bad characteristics there.

70. O excellent sage, trees bore fruits, grasses grew in plenty and flowers of variegated nature and colour blossomed there.

71. The entire forest became comparable to Kailāsa as it were the achievement of her penance.

CHAPTER TWENTYTHREE

(Attempt of Himavat to dissuade Pārvatī; gods go to meet Śiva)

Brahmā said :—

1. O excellent sage, while Pārvatī was engaged in penance thus for attaining Śiva, a long time elapsed but Śiva did not appear.

2. Then Himavat came there along with his wife, sons and ministers and spoke to Pārvatī, who had resolved to continue her penance.

Himavat said :—

3. O Pārvatī, O fortunate one, do not torture yourself by this penance. Dear girl, Śiva is not to be seen. Certainly he is detached

4. You are a young woman of tender limbs. You will be overpowered and exhausted by this penance. There is no doubt about it. I am speaking the truth.

5. Hence, O comely lady, get up. Come back to our house. Of what avail is Śiva by whom Kāma has been reduced to ashes ?

6. O goddess, hence not being emotional, Śiva will not come to claim you as the excellent lady. Why do you yearn for him ?

7. Just as the moon in the sky cannot be caught, O sinless girl, so also Śiva is inaccessible. Know this.

Brahmā said:—

8-9. The same thing was said by Menā, Sahya[28] mountain, Meru,[29] Mandara[30], Maināka[31] and Krauñca[32] and

28. It is one of the seven principal mountain ranges in India, a part of the Western Ghats at some distance from the sea. For details see P. 164.

29 It is a fabulous mountain, variously identified, supposed to be situated in the centre of the earth.

30. It is a great mountain which the Gods used for churning the ocean. It is supposed to be the mountain so named in Bhāgalpur. For details see P. 48.

31. See Note No. 12. P. 494

32. It is a mountain in the Himālayas stretching from Kailāsa to the south. It is personified here.

others, The unafflicted Pārvatī was thus sought to be dissuaded by various arguments.

10. When she was thus addressed by all of them, she with a broad smile, spoke to Himavat.

Pārvatī said:—

11. O father, O mother, O kinsmen, have all of you forgotten what I had said formerly. Even now listen to my vow.

12. This great God by whom Kāma has been burnt in fury is detached (you say). I shall propitiate him, by means of penance. He is favourably disposed to His devotees.

13. All of you please go to your respective abodes with delight. He will certainly be pleased. You need not be anxious over this.

14. With my penance alone here itself, I shall bring Him who burnt Kāma and the mountainous forest.

15. Sadāśiva can be easily served through penance. Ye fortunate Sirs, please know this truth. I am telling you the truth.

16. After addressing thus, her father Himālaya, her mother Menakā, her brothers Maināka and Mandara, the eloquent Pārvatī, the daughter of the king of mountains, kept quiet.

17. Thus addressed by Pārvatī, the lord of mountains and the other mountains went back the way they came, surprised within and praising her.

18. After all of them had departed, she with firm resolve in the great Truth, accompanied by her maids performed a severe penance.

19. O excellent sage, by that great penance the three worlds including the gods, Asuras and men, nay all the mobile and immobile beings, became heated.

20-21. The Prajāpatis, the Guhyakas and others experienced great distress but could not understand the reason thereof. The gods, Asuras, Yakṣas, Kinnaras, Cāraṇas, Siddhas, Sādhyas, the sages, the serpents and the Vidyādharas too had the same experience[33].

33. Siddhas, Sādhyas, Yakṣas, Kinnaras, Vidyādharas, Nāgas and Guhyakas are a class of semi-divine beings, thousands in number, of great purity and holiness, who reside in the Himālayas attending on Śiva.

22. All of them, Indra and others, who were extremely agitated, took leave of their preceptor and sought refuge in me on the mountain Sumeru. All their limbs had been scorched.

23. Devoid of splendour, and agitated excessively they bowed to and eulogised me. They spoke simultaneously thus.

The gods said :—

24. "O lord, the whole of this universe consisting of the mobile and immobile has been created by you. Why is it scorched so much ? We do not understand.

25. O Brahmā, please tell us the reason. O lord, you shall protect us, the gods whose bodies have been scorched. There is none else to protect us".

Brahmā said :—

26-27. On hearing their words I remembered Śiva and pondered over everything. I realised that the universe was scorched as a result of Pārvatī's penance. Accompanied by them I hastened respectfully to the milk ocean to inform Viṣṇu about it.

28. Reaching that place along with the gods, I saw Viṣṇu shining lustrously on a splendid seat. Bowing to and eulogising him with palms joined in reverence I spoke.

29. "Save, save, O Viṣṇu, save us who have sought refuge in you, being scorched by the great and severe penance of Pārvatī.

30. On hearing these words of mine on behalf of the heaven-dwellers, lord Viṣṇu seated on the Serpent couch[34] spoke to us :—

Viṣṇu said :—

31. The entire reason has been known to me. It is

Prajāpatis are the ten lords of created beings first created by Brahmā.

34. Viṣṇu is represented in human form slumbering on the serpent Śeṣa and floating on the waters of the ocean.

caused by Pārvatī's penance. I shall now go to lord Śiva accompanied by all of you.

32. O gods, we shall request lord Śiva to approach Pārvatī and marry her for the welfare of all the worlds.

33. We shall do everything necessary to make the Pināka-bearing lord of the gods go there to grant the boon to Śivā.

34. Therefore now we shall go to the place where the great lord Śiva of severe penance, the conferrer of all auspicious things, stays.

Brahmā said :—

35. On hearing those words of Viṣṇu, the gods and the rest became excessively afraid of Śiva, the furious, the annihilator and the one desirous of burning everything.

The gods said :—

36. We dare not go near the great lord Śiva who is very terrifying, furious and who has the burning brilliance of the deadly fire of dissolution.

37. Undoubtedly he will burn us all in His anger as Kāma, the indefatigable god, has been burnt by him.

Brahmā said :—

38. O sage, on hearing the words of Indra and others, Viṣṇu, the lord of Lakṣmī spoke these words, consoling all the gods.

Viṣṇu said :—

39. O gods, listen with pleasure and attention to my words. The lord, the destroyer of the fear of gods, will not consume you in fire.

40. Considering Śiva to be benevolent you shall shrewdly seek refuge in Him.

41. We shall all seek refuge in Śiva, the ancient Puruṣa, the lord, of excellent features, greater than the greatest, the supreme self, the great one resorting to penance.

Brahmā said :—

42. Thus urged by the great lord Viṣṇu they set out desirous of seeing the Pinākа-bearing lord Śiva.

43. At first Viṣṇu and others who were anxious to see the penance of Pārvatī went to her hermitage which was on the way.

44. On seeing the excellent penance of Pārvatī and being enveloped by her refulgence they bowed to her who was engaged in penance and who had brilliant features.

45. After praising the penance of Pārvatī whose body was achievement personified, the gods went to the place where the bull-bannered lord was present.

46. After reaching there the gods sent you in, O sage, and stood at a distance from Śiva who had reduced Kāma to ashes. They were watching.

47. O Nārada, you the fearless devotee of Śiva approached Śiva and saw the lord extremely pleased.

48. O sage, you came back again and beckoning to the gods, with effort you took them, Viṣṇu and others, to Him.

49. Then Viṣṇu and other gods went there and saw lord Śiva, favourably disposed to His devotees, delighted and comfortably seated.

50-51. Then Viṣṇu, the gods, the Siddhas, the sages and I bowed to and eulogised Śiva seated in the Yogic posture, surrounded by the Gaṇas. He was seated in the form of penance. We eulogised Him with hymns from the Vedas and Upaniṣads.

CHAPTER TWENTYFOUR

(*Śiva consents to marry Pārvatī*)

The gods said :—

1. Obeisance to lord Śiva, obeisance to the destroyer of Kāma; obeisance, obeisance to one worthy of eulogy; to one of profuse splendour, to the three-eyed lord.

2. Obeisance to Śiva clad in skin; obeisance to the

terrible, to the terrible-eyed, to great lord and to the lord of the three worlds.

3. You are the lord of worlds; you are the father, the mother and the lord; you are Śiva the benefactor. You are particularly compassionate.

4. You are the creator of all the worlds; O lord, you shall save us. O great God, except you who else is competent to destroy misery ?

Brahmā said :—

5. On hearing these words of the gods, Nandikeśvara who was endowed with great sympathy began to inform Śiva.

Nandikeśvara said :—

6. O foremost among the gods, Viṣṇu, other gods, the sages and Siddhas eulogise you in order to see you. They are being threatened by Asuras. Hence they seek some remedy and resort to thy feet, the seat of great fearlessness.

7. Hence, O lord of all, the sages and the gods shall be protected by you. You have been particularly mentioned as the kinsman of the distressed and favourably disposed towards your devotees.

Brahmā said :—

8. Śiva, who was thus informed by Nandin and who was extremely sympathetic, slowly reverted from His meditation and opened His eyes.

9. Then lord Śiva, the highly efficient great Ātman, reverted from His trance and spoke to the gods.

Śiva said .—

10. "O great gods, Viṣṇu, Brahmā and others, why have you come near me? Mention the reason for the same."

Brahmā said :—

11. On hearing these words of Śiva, all the gods rejoiced. They looked at Viṣṇu as if to induce him to speak.

12. Then Viṣṇu, the great devotee and benefactor of

the gods mentioned the matter of great importance of the gods as mentioned by me (before).

Viṣṇu said :—

13. "O Śiva, all the gods have come here to submit to you their misery perpetrated mysteriously by Tāraka.

14-15. O Śiva, the demon Tāraka will be killed only by your self-begotten son and not otherwise. Ponder over what I have said and take pity on me. Obeisance, O great lord, to you. O lord, redeem the gods from the misery brought about by Tāraka.

16. Hence, O lord Śiva, Pārvatī shall be accepted by you and grasped with your right hand. Accept her hand as offered in marriage by the lord of mountains. She is full of noble attributes.

17. On hearing those words of Viṣṇu, Śiva was pleased and said indicating to them the goal of the good, eager in Yogic feats as He was.

Śiva said :—

18-19. "If goddess Pārvatī, the most beautiful lady were to be accepted by me, she will be able to resuscitate Kāma on account of the marriage. Then all the gods, sages and ascetics will become lusty and incompetent in the great path of Yoga.

20. Kāma was burnt by me for the achievement of universal goal. It was at the suggestion of Brahmā, O Viṣṇu. No anxiety need be felt in this connection.

21. O lord of gods, O intelligent one, it is your duty not to be obdurate after considering the situation of what shall be done and what not.

22. O Viṣṇu, a great favour to the gods has been done by me when Kāma was burnt. May ye all stay free from lust certainly along with me.

23. Just as I, so also you, O gods, can without effort perform difficult tasks being endowed with the energy of great penance.

24. Kāma not being with you, you can be endowed with the supreme bliss and be free from aberrations by means of spiritual contemplation, O Gods.

25. O Brahmā, O Viṣṇu, O Indra, O sages and O gods, what had been done by Kāma formerly and forgotten by you may be recollected and pondered over.

26. O gods, meditation of everyone had been spoiled by the stubborn Kāma, the great archer formerly.

27. Kāma leads to hell; lust to anger, anger to delusion and delusion destroys penance.

28. Anger and lust shall be eschewed by you, the best of gods. My words shall be heeded by you all and not otherwise.

Brahmā said :—

29. After saying thus, the bull-bannered lord Śiva expressed the wish that Brahmā, Viṣṇu, the gods and the sages, should speak.

30. Śiva became quiet after resorting to meditation again. Śiva, as before, was surrounded by His Gaṇas.

31-33. Śiva thought within Himself His own Soul, the form that is unsullied, free from distortions, aberrations and ailments, the form which is greater than the greatest, eternal, free from sense of possession, free from obsessions, beyond the ken of sounds and words, devoid of attributes and knowable through perfect wisdom. Thinking upon His own features thus in His meditation, the lord, the cause of great enjoyment and protection became engrossed in supreme bliss.

34. On seeing Śiva again engaged in meditation all the dwellers of heaven, Viṣṇu, Indra and others, humbly told Nandin.

The gods said :—

35. What shall we do now? Śiva has become detached and has gone on meditation. You are a companion of Śiva and pure assistant. You are omniscient.

36. O chief of the Gaṇas, we seek refuge in you. Please guide us. What is the remedy by which Śiva can be propitiated?

Brahmā said :—

37. O sage, thus urged by the gods, Viṣṇu and others, Nandin, the favourite Gaṇa of Śiva replied to the gods.

Nandīśvara said :—

38. O Viṣṇu, O Brahmā, O Indra, O gods and O sages, pay heed to my words gratifying to Śiva.

39. If you persist still in your wish that Śiva shall marry, you shall eulogise with respect and piteous request.

40. O gods, great lord cannot be made subservient by ordinary devotion. The supreme lord does even what shall not be done when moved by extraordinary devotion.

41. O Brahmā, Viśṇu and other gods, then act accordingly, otherwise go the way you have come. Tarry not.

Brahmā said :—

42. O sage, on hearing his words, Viṣṇu and other gods, considering that it must be so, eulogised Śiva with pleasure.

43. O great lord, lord of the gods, O ocean of mercy, lift us up from the great distress. Save us who have sought refuge in you.

Brahmā said :—

44. Thus the gods eulogised Śiva with many piteous entreaties. They cried loudly being agitated by their devotion.

45. Viṣṇu accompanied by me spoke out many piteous words, remembering Śiva with great devotion.

46. Śiva was thus eulogised by the gods, Viṣṇu and me. He, the great lord, ceased His meditation due to His attachment for His devotees.

47. The delighted Śiva said heightening the pleasure of Viṣṇu and other gods, after glancing at them with merciful looks. Śiva is favourably disposed to His devotees.

Śiva said :—

48. O, Viṣṇu, O Brahmā, O Indra and other gods, why have you all collectively come here in my presence ? Tell me the truth.

Viṣṇu said :—

49. O great lord, you are omniscient. You are the

immanent being and the lord of all. Don't you know what is in our mind ? Still I speak at you bidding.

50. O Śiva, many kinds of miseries have befallen us due to the demon Tāraka. It is for that that you have been propitiated by the gods.

51. For attaining you Śivā is born of mountain Himācala. The demon's death can be at the hands of your son alone begotten of her.

52. This is the boon granted to him by Brahmā. Incapable of being killed by others, the demon harasses the entire universe.

53. At the instance of Nārada, she is performing a great penance. All the three worlds consisting of the mobile and immobile beings have been enveloped by her refulgence.

54. O lord Śiva, please go and grant Śivā the boon. O lord, destroy our misery and bestow happiness on us.

55. O Śiva, there is a great enthusiasm in my heart as well as in those of the gods to witness your marriage. Please get it performed in a fitting manner.

56. The opportune moment for the fulfilment of the boon granted by you to Ratī has arrived. Make your promise fruitful.

Brahmā said :—

57. After saying this and bowing to and eulogising Him with different hymns, Viṣṇu, the gods and the sages, all of us waited in front of Him.

58. On hearing the words of the gods Śiva, subservient to His devotees, laughed and replied. Śiva is a strict preserver of Vedic conventions.

Śiva said :—

59. O Viṣṇu, O Brahmā, O gods, all of you please hear with attention. I am going to say a specific thing in a suitable manner.

60. Marrying is not a proper thing for men. Marriage is a great fetter that binds firmly.

61. There are many base bondages in the world. Association with women is the toughest of all. One can free oneself from all bondages except that of women.

62. Anyone bound with nooses of iron and timber can secure release but one bound with nooses of women never frees oneself.

63. Worldly enjoyment tightens the bondage. Salvation is inaccessible to a man drawn to worldly enjoyment even in his dream.

64. If he wishes for happiness, an intelligent man shall duly forsake all worldly pleasures. Worldly enjoyment that dooms persons is on a par with poison.

65. O Indra, a man attains downfall even by conversing with a sensuous person. Great preceptors say that worldly enjoyment is a bitter beer mixed with sugar.

66. Although I know and realise all these, although I have specific wisdom yet I shall accede to your request and make it fruitful.

67. I am definitely subservient to my devotees. Hence I may do everything. I am known all over the three worlds as one who performs ill fitting things.

68. The vow of the king of Assam (Kāmarūpa)[35] was made fruitful. I saved king Sudakṣiṇā who had become a hireling and a prisoner.

69. I am the three-eyed God who bestows happiness but brought about the misery of Gautama. I especially curse those wicked persons who harass my devotees.

70. I have the feelings of endearment towards devotees. I drank up poison for the welfare of the gods. O gods, the miseries of the gods have always been removed by me.

71. For my devotees, I experienced many sufferings. I removed the misery of the sage Viśvānara by becoming a householder.

72. What is the use of talking much ? O Viṣṇu, O Brahmā, I speak the truth. All of you know truly that I have vowed as follows.

73. Whenever any devotee of mine is involved in any adversity I remove it instantaneously and completely.

74. I know the sufferings you undergo from the demon Tāraka. I shall remove them. Truth, I tell you the truth.

35. Kāmarūpa was also known as Prāgjyotiṣa. The designation applies to the country now called Assam. In ancient days it comprised the north-eastern part of Bengal and the western portion of Assam.

75. Although I am not interested at all in dalliance I shall marry Pārvatī for begetting a son.

76. O gods, all of you go back to your respective abodes fearlessly. I shall achieve your task. In this respect you need not be anxious at all.

Brahmā said :—

77. O sage, after saying this, Śiva became silent and entered into spiritual contemplation. Viṣṇu and other gods went back to their respective abodes.

CHAPTER TWENTYFIVE

(*The seven celestial sages test Pārvatī*)

Nārada said :—

1. When Brahmā, Viṣṇu and other gods had gone along with the sages what happened thereafter ?

2. O dear one, what did Śiva do? Within what time did He go to grant the boon ? How ? Please tell me for my pleasure.

Brahmā said :—

3. When Brahmā and other gods had gone back to their respective abodes, Śiva entered into spiritual contemplation in order to test her penance.

4. He meditated upon His own soul within Himself, the Ātman that is greater than the greatest, free from illusion and obsessions and stationed within itself.

5. The bull-bannered lord Śiva, the object of the expression That,* whose movements are unknown, is the cause of enjoyment and protection. Śiva is the lord Supreme.

Brahmā said :—

6. O dear then, Pārvatī was engaged in great penance. Even Śiva wondered at that.

7. He became distracted from spiritual contemplation. A deity subservient to His devotees cannot be otherwise. Śiva,

* It refers to the formula "that are you", identifying the soul with the supreme soul.

the cause of great enjoyment and protection remembered the seven celestial sages, Vasiṣṭha and others.

8. Immediately on being remembered, the seven sages[36] came there with faces beaming with delight and praising their good fate.

9. Bowing to Him with folded arms and bent shoulders they eulogised lord Śiva with extreme pleasure by means of words choked with devotional feelings.

The seven sages said:—

10. "O great God, lord of gods, O lord, O ocean of mercy, we have become very well blessed since we have been remembered by you now.

11. Why have we been remembered ? We may kindly be commanded. O lord, have pity on us as on your own slaves. Obeisance be to you.

Brahmā said :—

12. On hearing the words of the sages, lord Śiva, the storehouse of sympathy spoke lovingly and laughingly with eyes beaming like full-blown lotus.

Lord Śiva said :—

13. O dear seven celestial sages, listen to my words. You are all my benefactors. You are clever and perfectly wise.

14. The great Goddess Pārvatī, the daughter of the mountain is performing a penance now in the mountain called Gaurīśikhara, with a steady mind.

15. O brahmins, she is desirous of attaining me as her husband. She is being served by her maids. She has discarded all other desires. She is determined in her resolve.

16. O excellent sages, you go there at my bidding. With love in mind, conduct the test of her resolve.

17. O virtuous ones of good rites, at my bidding,

36. The seven sages viz. Marīci, Atri Aṅgiras, Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu and Vasiṣṭha are represented by a group of seven stars called Ursa Major.

you need not hesitate to employ even deceitful and critical remarks.

Brahmā said :—

18. Thus commanded, those sages quickly went there where the mother of universe, the brilliant daughter of the mountain, shone with refulgence.

19. There she was seen as the personified achievement of penance itself. She was shining brilliantly with great splendour.

20. Mentally bowing to her, the seven sages, of good rites, humbly spoke to her after being warmly welcomed and worshipped by her.

The sages said :—

21. O daughter of the mountain, listen. Why do you perform this penance ? Which god do you wish to propitiate ? For what purpose ? Please tell us now.

Brahmā said :—

22. Thus addressed by the brahmins, the goddess Śivā, daughter of the lord of mountains, replied truly before them though it was a great secret.

Pārvatī said :—

23. O great sages, listen to my words with hearty affection. I am saying only what I thought in my own way.

24. On hearing my words you will laugh at me considering my proposal impossible. O brahmins, I hesitate in revealing it but what can I do ?

25. This mind of mine is resolute helplessly attempting at a great task. Verily it is trying to erect a high wall on the surface of water.

26. At the bidding of the celestial sage I am performing this steady penance with the desire that Rudra be my husband.

27. The unfledged birdling of my mind flies up tenaciously. May lord Śiva, the storehouse of mercy fulfil its desire.

Brahmā said :—

28. On hearing her words, the sages honoured Pārvatī mentally with pleasure but spoke these deceptive false words laughingly.

The sages said :—

29. O daughter of the mountain, although you are wise and intelligent, you are not able to see through the conduct of that celestial sage who professes to be a great scholar but who is cruel-minded.

30. Nārada is a quibbler. He misleads others. If his words are paid heed to, you stand to lose in every respect.

31. Now listen to a true anecdote that sheds light thereon, with keen intellect. We are enlightening you out of love and affection, take it to heart.

32. Dakṣa, the son of Brahmā, at the bidding of his father, begot ten thousand sons of his wife. He dearly loved them and employed them in performing a great penance.

33. The sons went to the holy lake Nārāyaṇasaras[37] in the western zone for performing penance. Nosing it out, Nārada too went there.

34. Sage Nārada misled them with his deceptive instructions. At his instance, they never went back home to their father.

35. On hearing this, Dakṣa was infuriated but his father consoled him. Thereafter he begot a thousand other sons and engaged them in penance.

36. The sons too went to the same place for penance at the bidding of their father. Nārada too went there, a self-appointed instructor for them.

37. He gave them the same instruction and they went the way of their brothers. They never returned to the parental abode. They were engrossed in the avocation of mendicants.

38. O daughter of mountain, the good conduct of Nārada is thus well-known. Now hear about another activity of his in making men detached.

37. The Nārāyaṇa lake has not been identified. Probably it is a lake of the Nārāyaṇa hill, near Badrinath in Garhwal.

39. There was a Vidyādhara named Citraketu. The sage instructed him and made him detached from his house.

40. He bestowed his instructions on Prahlāda and made him suffer much at the hands of Hiraṇyakaśipu. He is definitely a person who splits others' intellect.

41. Whomsoever this sage advocates his philosophy, very pleasing to the ears, generally the same person discards his hearth and home and begins to beg for alms.

42. Nārada has a dirty soul though he is endowed with a white brilliant complexion for ever. We know him particularly because we are his associates.

43. People from a distance may describe a stork as a gentle bird that does not prey on fish. But in fact an associate knows the conduct of his associates.

44. You too who are honoured by the wise have followed his advice and thus become a fool. That is why you are performing this severe penance.

45. O young lady, He, for whose sake you are performing this elaborate penance is a perpetually indifferent person of no emotional disturbance. Undoubtedly He is an enemy of Kāma.

46. The trident-bearing Śiva has an inauspicious body, is free from shame and has no home or pedigree. He is naked and ill-featured. He associates with ghosts and goblins and the like.

47. That rogue of a sage has destroyed your discretion with his deception. He has deluded you with apparently good arguments and made you perform this penance.

48. O great Goddess, daughter of the mountain, you alone think within yourself how much pleasure could be derived by getting such a bridegroom.

49. At first he married Satī, the chaste daughter of Dakṣa, eagerly but the fool that he was he could not maintain the household even for a few days.

50. He accused her and forsook her Himself. The lord went on meditating on His own form, free from stains and sorrows and sported happily.

51. He is single without a second and without attach-

ment. He is after salvation, O gentle lady, how can a woman put up with him.

52. O blessed one, even now, at our bidding, return to your house. Cast off this foolish intention. You will benefit thereby.

53. A befitting bridegroom for you is lord Viṣṇu endowed with all good qualities. He is a resident of Vaikuṇṭha,[38] lord of wealth and is skilled in sports.

54. O Pārvatī, with him we shall fix your marriage that will confer all happiness on you. Leave off this obduracy. Be happy.

Brahmā said :—

55. On hearing these words, Pārvatī, the mother of the universe, laughed and spoke to the wise sages.

Pārvatī said :—

56. O excellent sages, what you have said may be true according to your light and wisdom; but O brahmins, my tenacity cannot be affected.

57. Being born of a mountain, toughness is congenital to my body. Pondering over this with a short intellect you will please desist from preventing me.

58. I shall never discard the wholesome advice of the celestial sage. Vedic scholars know and affirm that the advice of a preceptor is wholesome.

59. Those who firmly believe that the advice of the preceptor is true will experience great happiness here and hereafter. They will have no unhappiness anywhere.

60. Those who distrust the maxim in their heart of hearts that the advice of preceptors is true will experience nothing but misery here and hereafter, no happiness anywhere.

61. O brahmins, the advice of the preceptors is not to be eschewed at all. Whether it leads to the attachment of a household or otherwise, my tenacity will remain pleasing to me for ever.

62. O excellent sages, what you have just spoken shall

38. Vaikuṇṭha, also called Vaibhra, is the abode of Viṣṇu variously described as situated on the eastern peak of Mount Meru or in the Northern ocean.

be interpreted in another way. I shall explain it in brief.

63. When you glorify Viṣṇu as the abode of noble qualities or as a sportive deity I do not contradict. As to your statement that Sadāśiva is devoid of attributes I shall tell you the reason.

64. Śiva is Brahman, unchanging and without aberration. He assumes shapes and forms for the welfare of his devotees. He does not make a show of worldly lordship.

65. Therefore he assumes the attitude and behaviour of great Yogins. Śiva is a supreme bliss personified and an Avadhūta in form.

66. Interest in embellishment and ornaments shall be found in those who are deluded by illusion and who are not in unison with the Brahman. The lord is devoid of attributes, unborn, free from illusion, of invisible movement and a cosmic Being.

67. O brahmins, Śiva does not shower His blessings on the ground of faith, caste etc. I know Śiva truly only through the blessings of the preceptor.

68. O brahmins, if Śiva does not marry me I shall remain for ever a virgin. Truth, I tell you the truth.

69. Even if the sun were to rise in the west, even if the mountain Meru were to move; even if the fire were to be cool and even if the lotus were to bloom on a rock at the top of a mountain, my stubbornness cannot be nullified. I am telling you the truth.

Brahmā said :—

70. After saying thus and bowing to those sages, the daughter of the mountain stopped and remembered Śiva with an unruffled mind.

71. On realising the resoluteness of Pārvatī, the sages hailed her and bestowed excellent blessings upon her.

72. O sage, after bowing to the goddess, the sages who wanted to test her, were delighted. They immediately returned to Śiva's abode.

73. Having reached the place they informed Śiva of all the details. Taking leave of Him with respect, they went to the heaven.

CHAPTER TWENTYSIX

(*Pārvatī-Jaṭila dialogue*)

Brahmā said :—

1. When those sages returned to their abodes, lord Śiva, the cause of great enjoyment and protection wanted to test the penance of the goddess.

2. Under the pretext of testing, Śiva wanted to see her. With a delighted mind He assumed the form of a Jaṭila (an ascetic with matted hair) and went to the forest of penance of Pārvatī.

3. He took the form of a very old man with the body of a brahmin. His brilliance shone. He was delighted in mind. He had an umbrella and a staff (to support Him).

4. There He saw the goddess surrounded by her maids on the platform, as pure as the digit of the moon.

5. Śiva, who is favourably disposed towards His devotees, approached her with pleasure in the guise of a celibate.

6. On seeing that brahmin of wonderful refulgence come, goddess Parvatī worshipped Him with all the articles of worship.

7. She worshipped him with great joy by means of well prepared and arranged articles of worship. Thereafter Pārvatī enquired after the health of the brahmin with respect.

Pārvatī said :—

8. Who are you and whence have you come in the guise of a Brahmacārin? You are making this forest refulgent by your splendour. Please speak, O foremost among Vedic scholars.

The brahmin said :—

9. I am an aged brahmin roaming about as I please. I am an intelligent ascetic bestowing happiness and helping others.

10. Who are you? What is your parentage? Why do you perform penance in this isolated forest? Your penance cannot be surpassed even by the sages of eminent status.

11. You are neither a small girl nor an old woman.

You appear to be an auspicious young woman. How is it that you are performing this penance even when you are unmarried.

12. O gentle lady, are you the wife of an ascetic who does not provide you with food and shelter and so leaving you has gone to another place ?

13. Tell me, in which family are you born ? Who is your father ? What are your undertakings ? You are very fortunate. Futile is your interest in penance.

14. Are you the mother of the Vedas ? Are you Lakṣmī or Sarasvatī ? I dare not guess who you are ?

Pārvatī said :—

15. O brahmin, I am not the mother of the Vedas, nor Lakṣmī nor Sarasvatī. I am the daughter of Himācala and my name is Pārvatī.

16. Previously I had been born as Satī, the daughter of Dakṣa. By Yogic means I cast off my body since my husband was insulted by my father.

17. Even in this life, Śiva came to me but due to ill luck, He reduced Kāma to ashes, left me and went away.

18. O brahmin, when Śiva went away, I came out of my father's house, being greatly dejected, to perform this steady penance on the banks of the celestial river.[39]

19. Even after performing this severe penance for a long time, I could not attain Him. I was just to consign myself to fire but on seeing you, I have stopped for a while.

20. Now you can go. I shall enter fire since I have not been accepted by Śiva. Wherever I take birth I shall woo only Śiva.

Brahmā said :—

21. After saying so, Pārvatī jumped into the fire in the presence of the brahmin although she was forbidden by Him again and again.

39. The celestial Gaṅgā is said to flow from the toe of Viṣṇu and to have been brought down from heaven, by the prayers of Bhagīratha to purify the ashes of the sixty thousand sons of king Sagara who had been burnt by the angry glance of the saga Kapila.

22. Even as she jumped into the fire, it became as cool as sandal paste due to her ascetic power.

23. The brahmin stopped her standing on her way as she was trying to go away and asked her laughingly.

The Brahmin said :—

24. O gentle lady, I cannot understand anything. Your penance is wonderful. Your body is not charred by the fire. Still your desire remains unsatiated so far.

25. O gentle lady, let me know about your desire; I am a brahmin who can bestow pleasure upon everyone.

26. Please tell me everything truly and methodically. Since we have become friends nothing should be kept a secret from me.

27. I wish to ask you now. O gentle lady, whom do you wish to have as your husband ? It is in you that the fruit of penance is seen.

28. If your penance is for others or for the supreme object, wherefore should you perform it at all ? You had a jewel in your hand, you cast it off and have taken up a base metal instead.

29. Why have you rendered your beauty in vain by taking recourse to this penance that eschewing different sorts of fine clothes hide is worn by you.

30. Hence tell me the reason, truthfully, for this penance. Let me, a great brahmin, be pleased on hearing the same.

Brahmā said :—

31. Thus asked by him, Pārvatī urged her maid. She of good rites made everything narrated to him through her maid.

32. Induced by Pārvatī, her bosom friend Vijayā who knew all about her good rites spoke to the ascetic.

The maid said:—

33. O saintly sir, listen. I shall recount the story of Pārvatī as well as the reason for penance, if you wish to hear.

34. This my friend is the daughter of Himācala, lord

of mountains. She is the daughter of Menakā named Kālī but famous as Pārvatī.

35. She is not married to anyone nor does she desire any other than Śiva for her husband. She has performed this penance for three thousand years.

36. It was for that purpose that my friend started penance like this. I shall tell you the reason. Listen, O excellent brahmin, O saintly one.

37. Leaving off Indra and other gods, Viṣṇu and Brahmā, Pārvatī wishes to attain the Pināka-bearing Śiva as her husband.

38. She my friend planted many trees before. O brahmin, all of them have put forth flowers and fruits.

39-40. My friend has been performing severe penance at the bidding of Nārada to make her beauty fruitful, to embellish her father's race and to bless Kāma. She has directed this penance to lord Śiva. O holy ascetic, how is it that her desire is not fulfilled.

41. O excellent brahmin, you enquired of her desire. I have just told you out of my love for her. What else do you wish to hear.

Brahmā said :—

42. On hearing these truthful words of Vijayā, O sage, Śiva who came disguised as an ascetic said laughingly.

The ascetic said :—

43. The maid has said something, but I deduce only a huge joke therefrom. If it be true, let the gentle lady herself speak out.

Brahmā said :—

44. When these words were uttered by that brahmin ascetic, goddess Pārvatī spoke to the brahmin thus.

CHAPTER TWENTYSEVEN

(Description of the fraudulent words of the Brahmacārin)

Pārvatī said : —

1. O great brahmin, listen to my story entirely. What my friend has said just now is the whole truth, not otherwise.

2. I am telling you the truth and not a lie. Śiva has been wooed by me, by mind, speech and action as well as by means of ascetic feelings.

3. I know that it is an inaccessible object. How can I attain it ? Still out of my eagerness I am performing this penance.

Brahmā said :—

4. After saying these words to him, the daughter of the mountain kept quiet. On hearing the words of Pārvatī the brahmin said.

The brahmin said :—

5. So long I had been desirous of knowing what our gentle lady craves for that she performs this great penance.

6. O dear lady, I have now known it through your own words. I am now going away from this place. You can do as you please.

7. What should be done by you is not mentioned by me. To me your further friendship is useless. But this should be mentioned that your future should be happy.

Brahmā said :—

8. After saying these words to her when he proposed to go, goddess Pārvatī bowed to and spoke to the brahmin.

Pārvatī said :—

9. "O excellent brahmin, why do you go? Stay

and tender me wholesome advice". When she said thus, the staff-bearing brahmin stopped and spoke.

The brahmin said :—

10. If you are stopping me with devotion, truly desirous of hearing then I shall explain everything whereby you may gain some wisdom.

11. I know Śiva through and through with all His weighty attributes. I shall tell you the truth. Listen with attention.

12. The great lord is bull-bannered. His body is smeared with ashes. His hair is matted. He is clad in the hide of a tiger. He has covered His body with the hide of an elephant.

13. He holds the skull. Serpents twine round His limbs. Poison has left a mark on his neck. He eats even forbidden stuffs. He has odd eyes and is definitely awful.

14. His birth and pedigree cannot be traced. He is devoid of the enjoyment of a householder. He has ten arms. He is mostly naked and is ever accompanied by ghosts and goblins.

15. What is the reason whereby you wish Him to be your husband? O gentle lady, where has your wisdom gone? Think well and tell me.

16. A previous terrible activity of His has been heard by me. If you are interested in hearing I shall tell you.

17. Dakṣa's daughter, the chaste lady Satī wooed Vṛṣabhavāhana (Śiva) as her husband. Fortunately their union was well known.

18. Satī was discarded by Dakṣa because she was the wife of the skull-bearing Śiva. Śiva too was eschewed in the allocation of shares in the sacrifice.

19. On account of the insult Satī was infuriated and she discarded her dear life. Śiva too was abandoned by her.

20. You are a jewel among women. Your father is the king of all mountains. Why do you crave for a husband like this and that too by means of a severe penance?

21. Handing over a gold coin you wish to buy a piece

of glass. Setting aside the pure sandal paste you wish to smear mud over your body.

22. Unmindful of the sunlight you wish to have the light of the glow worm. Throwing away the fine China[50] silk you wish to wear the hide.

23. Discarding the life at home you yearn for a life in the forest, O madam, throwing away excellent treasure you wish a piece of iron in return.

24. Leaving off the guardians of the quarters you run after Śiva. This is not well said It is against the conventions of the world.

25. Where you with eyes like the petals of a lotus ? Where this three-eyed creature—Śiva ? You are moon-faced while Śiva is five-faced.*

26. On your head the divine plaited hair shines with glossy splendour like a serpent. But Śiva has only the matted hair to boast of.

27. Sandal paste is applied on your body, while the ashes of the funeral pyre on that of Śiva. Where your silken garment and where the elephant-hide of Śiva.

28. Where the divine ornaments and where the serpents of Śiva ? Where the deities that move about and where Śiva, fond of goblins and their oblations ?

29. Where the pleasing sound of his tabor ? Where His peculiar drum called Damaru ? Where the set of fine drums and the inauspicious sound of his horn ?

30. Where the inauspicious sound of double-drum and where the sound of his throat ? There is no matching beauty between you both.

31. If He had money to spare how could He have been a naked being ? His vehicle is a bull. He has no other appendages.

32. There is not even a single quality in the odd-eyed Śiva out of the innumberable qualities pleasing to women and expected in bride-grooms.

33. Your friend Kāma was burnt by Śiva. He insulted you also by leaving you off and going elsewhere.

50. The Chinese silken cloth is mentioned also by Kālidāsa in the Śākuntala I. 34.

*On the five-faced feature of Śiva see Note 23 P. 46

34. His caste is not recognised. He has no learning or wisdom. His assistants are the ghosts. Poison is seen even in His throat.

35. He also moves about in isolation. He is detached from everything particularly. Hence you cannot fix your mind in Him.

36. Where your necklace and where the garland of skulls that he wears ? Where your rich divine unguent and where the ash from the funeral pyre that He has on His body ?

37. O divine lady, everything concerning you and Śiva, such as form, features etc. is mutually discordant. I do not like your resolution. You can do whatever you please.

38. You yourself have evolved taste for all bad objects. Turn your mind from Him. If not, do whatever you please.

Brahmā said: —

39. On hearing these words of that brahmin, Pārvatī said angrily to the brahmin who discredited Śiva.

CHAPTER TWENTY EIGHT

(*Pārvatī sees Śiva's real form*)

Pārvatī said :—

1. So long I have been thinking that some one else has come. Now everything has become clear. You are a person who cannot be killed.

2. O lord, what has been said by you is known. It is not otherwise. If what has been said by you is real, it cannot be called unreal.

3. Sometimes lord Śiva is seen in that guise. But He is the supreme Brahman who, out of his own accord, takes up bodies in his own sports.

4. You have now come in the form of a student ascetic for the sake of deceiving me. Using false arguments, you have spoken fraudulent words.

5. I know the real form of Śiva very particularly. I shall therefore explain Śiva's reality in the proper perspective after careful consideration.

6. He is in fact devoid of attributes. But for some resons He takes up attributes. How can He have a birth, he who is really attributeless but takes up attributes ?

7. Sadāśiva is the support and receptacle of all lores. Of what avail is learning to Him who is perfect and the supreme soul ?

8. At the beginning of the Kalpa, all the Vedas were given by Śiva to Viṣṇu in the form of breath. Who can be a good lord equal to Him ?

9. How can He be measured in age, He who is primordial to everything and everyone. Even primordial nature (Prakṛti) is born of Him. Of what avail is then Energy to Him ?

10. With the threefold Energies,[41] Śiva blesses those who worship Him always as the lord of Energies.

11. Every individual soul becomes fearless and conquers death by worshipping Him. Hence His designation 'the conqueror of death' is famous in all the three worlds.

12. Viṣṇu attains and retains his Viṣṇuhood by His favour. Similarly Brahmā his Brahmāhood and the gods their godhood.

13-14 Whenever the lord of the gods wants to see Śiva he has to propitiate His gate-keepers, the ghosts etc., otherwise his crown becomes shattered by batons. Really Śiva is a great lord. He has no need for many attendants.

15. What is it that cannot befall one who serves the auspicious-featured Śiva. What is deficient in that lord ? Does Sadāśiva like me ?

16. Even if a person is perpetually poor for seven lives, after serving Śiva, his prosperity becomes unhampered.

17. How can he find benefit inaccessible-he in whose presence the eight Siddhis[42] (achievements) dance always for the sake of propitiation with speechless mouths or with lowered faces.

41. The three elements of Energy consist of (1) pre-eminent position, (2) good counsel and (3) adventurous undertaking.

42. On the eightfold superhuman faculties, see Note 203. P. 235.

18. Although Śiva resorts to inauspicious things yet by thinking on Him everything becomes auspicious.

19. His worship fulfils all desires. How can there be aberration in Him who always remains in an unmodified state.

20. People are sanctified by merely seeing the person in whose mouth the auspicious name "Śiva" is ever present.

21. If, as you say, the ash from the funeral pyre is unholy, how is it that the same transferred to Śiva's body is taken thence and worn on the head by the gods ?

22. How can He be easily realised, He who is the deity that creates, sustains and annihilates the worlds, all the same who is devoid of attributes and is termed Śiva ?

23. The form of Śiva, the supreme soul, is that of Brahman, devoid of attributes. How can people like you know it, people with extrovert faces ?

24. Persons of evil conduct, sinners and those who have gone astray from the path of the gods do not at all know the reality of Śiva of attributeless form.

25. If, out of ignorance of His reality, any one were to discredit Śiva, his merit hoarded ever since birth becomes reduced to ashes.

26. You have censured Śiva of immeasurable splendour and I have worshiped you, hence I have become sinful.

27. On seeing a person who hates Śiva one should take bath along with one's clothes. On seeing a person who hates Śiva one should perform expiatory rites.

28. O wicked one, you profess knowledge of Śiva. But you should know that the eternal Śiva is not known at all.

29. Whatever may be the form or feature of Śiva, He is multiformed. Still He is my favourite. He is without aberration and beloved of the good.

30. Neither Viṣṇu nor Brahmā can equal that noble soul. How can then the gods and others be ? They are always dependent on Time and are not eternal.

31. After realising this with my sharp intellect factually, I have come to this forest and am performing the elaborate penance for attaining Śiva.

32. My ambition is to attain the supreme lord who is favourably disposed to His devotees and who blesses the distressed.

Brahmā said:—

33. After saying this, O sage, Pārvatī, the daughter of the mountain, stopped and meditated on Śiva with unaffected mind.

34-35. On hearing the words of the goddess when the brahmin ascetic began to say something, Pārvatī whose mind was fixed on Śiva and who was averse to hear any disparaging remarks about Śiva spoke immediately to Vijayā, her maid.

Pārvatī said :—

36. This base brahmin must be prevented strenuously. He is inclined to say something again. He will surely censure Śiva.

37. Not only does he who disparages Śiva incur sin but also he who hears the same.[43]

38. A person who disparages Śiva is definitely worthy of being killed by Śiva's attendants. If it is a brahmin he must be dismissed or the hearer shall go away from that place immediately.

39. This wicked man will again disparage Śiva. Since he is a brahmin, he is not to be killed. He shall be abandoned. He shall not be seen at all.

40. Let us leave this place at once and go elsewhere. Do not tarry. Let there be no more talk with this ignorant man.

Brahmā said :—

41. Saying this, O sage, even as Pārvatī was about to step ahead, the brahmin manifesting as Śiva clasped his beloved.

42. After assuming the handsome form in the manner Pārvatī had meditated upon and manifesting it to Pārvatī, Śiva addressed her while she stood with her lowered head.

43. For the similarity of ideas and verbal expression, compare Kālidāsa's Kumāra V. 83.

Śiva said :—

43. "Where will you go, leaving me? You are not to be discarded again by me. I am delighted. Tell me what boon shall I grant you. There is nothing that cannot be given to you.

44. From today I am your slave bought by you by performing penance.[44] I have been bought by your beauty. Even a moment appears like a Yuga.

45. O Pārvatī, O great Goddess, you are my eternal wife. Let this shyness be eschewed. You please ponder with your keen intellect.

46. O steady-minded one, you have been tested by me in various ways. Let my guilt be excused in following this worldly game.

47. Even in the three worlds I do not see a beloved like you. O Pārvatī, in every respect I am subservient to you. You can fulfil all your desires.

48. O beloved, come on near me. You are my wife. I am your bridegroom. I shall immediately go to my abode—the excellent mountain, along with you.

Brahmā said :—

49. When the lord of the gods spoke in this way, Pārvatī rejoiced. Whatever distress she had felt during penance she cast off as something old.

50. O excellent sage, her weariness subsided. In fact, when the fruit is realised, the exertion felt during the process of undertaking perishes.

CHAPTER TWENTYNINE

(*Śivā-Śiva dialogue*)

Nārada said :—

1. O Brahmā, O fortunate one, what happened thereafter? I wish to hear everything. Please narrate the glory of Pārvatī to me.

44. For the similarity of ideas and verbal expression, cp. Ibid V. 86.

Brahmā said :—

2. O celestial sage, let this be listened to. I shall resume the story joyfully, the story that quells all sins and increases devotion to Śiva.

3. O brahmin, on hearing the words of Śiva, the great Soul and on seeing His pleasant form and features Pārvatī was delighted much.

4. The highly chaste lady, goddess Pārvatī replied to the lord standing near with great pleasure and face beaming with love.

Pārvatī said :—

5. O lord, O lord of gods, you are my husband. Has it been forgotten by you why you destroyed the sacrifice of Dakṣa formerly with great tenacity ?

6. Listen, O lord of gods, I am born of Menā for the achievement of the task of the gods terrified to the quick by Tāraka.

7. O lord of gods, if you are delighted, if you are sympathetic O lord, become my husband. O lord do as I say.

8. With your permission I am going to my father's abode. Let your pure great glory be made well known.

9. O lord, you will please go to Himavat. Clever in divine sports, be the mendicant and beg of him, me as your alms.

10. Spreading your glory in the worlds you shall make everything about my father fruitful. Thus you start your householder's life.

11. There is no doubt that my father with his kinsmen will accede to your request as he has already been urged by the sages lovingly.

12. Formerly as Dakṣa's daughter I was offered to you by my father. But the marriage rites were not duly performed then.

13. The planets were not worshipped by my father. Therefore a great defect occurred in our marriage in regard to the planets.

14. Hence, O lord, you will celebrate marriage in

accordance with the rules for the fulfilment of the task of the gods.

15. The customary procedures of the marriage shall certainly be followed. Let Himavat know that an auspicious penance has been performed well by his daughter.

Brahmā said:—

16. On hearing these words, Sadāśiva was highly delighted. Laughingly and lovingly He spoke to Pārvatī.

Śiva said—

17. O great Goddess, listen to my important statement. See that our marriage rites are performed in the proper manner without deficiency.

18. O sweet-faced one, all the living beings Brahmā and others are non-eternal. O beautiful lady, know all these visible things to be perishable.

19. Know that the single beings assumed manifold forms. The attributeless took over the attributes. That which is self-luminous had other lights imposed on it.

20. O gentle lady, I, the independent, have been made subservient by you. You alone are the great illusory power, the Primordial nature that creates.

21. This entire universe has been made of illusion; it is held by the supreme soul with His great intellect. It is united and enveloped by the Gaṇas of the nature of pervading souls of meritorious deeds, akin to the nature of supreme soul.

22. What are these planets? What are these sets of seasons? What are those other planets? O gentle lady, what is said by you, O fair-complexioned one.

23. We two have created the universe different in attributes and actions for the sake of the devotees and with a disposition favourable to them.

24. You are indeed the subtle primordial nature consisting of Rajas, Sattva and Tamas. You are capable of perpetual activity. You are both possessed and devoid of attributes.

25. O slender-waisted lady, of all living beings I am

the soul without abberation without yearnings. I take up bodies at the requests and wishes of my devotees.

26. O daughter of the mountain, I will not go up to Himavat your father. I will not become a mendicant and beg of him for you.

27. O daughter of the lord of mountains, even a weighty person endowed with great qualities, even a noble soul, is considered base immediately after uttering the words—"Please give me".

28. O benevolent lady, after knowing this what is it that you say is our duty? Gentle lady, do as you wish.

Brahmā said:—

29. Thus addressed, the great goddess, the chaste lady of lotus-like eyes told Śiva with devotion after bowing to Him again and again.

Pārvatī said:—

30. "You are the cosmic soul and I am the cosmic nature. There is nothing to deliberate on this. We two are independent and subservient to the devotees. We two are both possessed and devoid of attributes.

31. O lord Śiva, with effort, you will please do according to my request. O Śiva, beg of Himavat for me, You will bestow a fortune on him.

32. O great lord, be sympathetic. I am your devotee for ever. I am your wife for ever in ever birth.

33. You are Brahman, the great soul, devoid of attributes greater than primordial nature, without abberration, free from yearnings, independent, great lord.

34. Still you are possessed of attributes too and enthusiastic in the uplift of the devotees. You sport about in your own soul engrossed in it and you are clever in your different sports.

35. O great lord, I know you in every respect. O omniscient, of what avail is a detailed talk. Take pity on me.

36. Spread your glory in the world indulging in your wonderful divine sports. Singing them, O lord, people can cross the ocean of worldly existence.

Brahmā said:—

37. After saying these words to the great lord, Pārvatī stopped and bowed to Him frequently with shoulders stooping and palms joined in reverence.

38. Thus addressed by her, Śiva of the noble soul, just to follow and imitate the worldly conventions thought that it should be so. Being desirous of doing so he rejoiced.

39. Then Śiva vanished. With a great delight He went to Kailāsa but at His separation from Pārvatī his mind was distressed.

40. After reaching there He mentioned the news to Nandin and others. He was very much delighted.

41. Those Gaṇas, Bhairava and others were greatly pleased. They celebrated the occasion with great festivities.

42. O Nārada, all went on auspiciously. All misery was at an end. Śiva too was in a pleasant mood.

CHAPTER THIRTY

(The Celebration of Pārvatī's Return)

Nārada said:—

1. O Brahmā, O dear, of great fortune, you have the real vision and are blessed. This wonderful story was heard by me, thanks to your blessings.

2. When Śiva returned to His mountain, O intelligent one, what did Pārvatī allauspicious do and where did she go? Please tell me.

Brahmā said:—

3. O dear, listen with pleasure to what happened thereafter when Śiva returned to His place. I shall mention it, remembering Śiva,

4. Accompanied by her maids and assuming meaningful dress and features she returned to her father's house repeating the name of lord Śiva.

5. On hearing that Pārvatī was returning, Menā and

Himavat excessively delighted went ahead seated in a divine vehicle.

6-7 The chief priest, the citizens, the maids, the kinsmen and also others accompanied them. All the brothers with Maināka, the eldest, accompanied them highly delighted and crying shouts of victory.

8-12. The auspicious waterpot was placed in the main highway decorated with sandal paste, aguru, musk and branches of trees with fruits. The priests, brahmins and sages reciting the Vedas, dancing girls, all went ahead seated on lofty elephants to receive her. All round stumps of plantain trees were fixed. Women along with their sons and husbands held lamps in their hands. Brahmins were shouting mantras etc. in an auspicious voice. Various instruments were played. Conch shells were sounded. In the meantime Pārvatī reached the outskirts of the city. Entering the city she saw her parents again.

13. On seeing the parents rushing at her in their great delight, she gladly bowed to them along with her maids.

14. They gave her their blessings and embraced her. Saying "O darling," they shed tears in their excitement of love.

15. Women near and dear as also the wives of her brothers embraced her closely with great pleasure.

16. "A great task has been well accomplished by you. It has saved the whole family. All of us are sanctified by your noble conduct".

17. Praising her with these and similar words they bowed to her with great delight. They worshipped her with sandal paste and sweet scented flowers in great joy.

18. At that time the gods, seated in their aerial chariots in the sky, showered auspicious flowers, bowed to and eulogised her with hymns.

19. Then the Brahmins and others joyfully took you within the city in a resplendent chariot.

20. Then the brahmins, the maids and other women took her within the house with due honour.

21. O great sage, ladies performed her ceremonial ablution; the brahmins offered benedictions. Himvat and Menakā rejoiced much.

22. Himavat considered his houschold life fruitful. A daughter is far better than an ignoble son. He praised you too, Nārada, saying "Well done, Well done".

23. The lord of the mountains gave monetary gifts to brahmins and lords. He made the brahmins recite auspicious hymns, as part of the festivities.

24. The parents delighted with their daughter; the brothers and the sisters gathered joyfully in the courtyard, O sage.

25. The happy and delighted Himavat, honoured everyone. Then he went to the Gaṅgā for his bath.

26. In the meantime, Śiva, favourably disposed to His disciples and prone to divine sports, assumed the guise of a dancer and approached Menakā.

27-28. He held the blowing horn in his left and the drum in his right hand. He wore a red cloth and had the wallet suspended behind his back. In the guise of a dancer with the skill of dancing and singing, he danced well and sang many songs in sweet voice.

29. He blew the horn and played on the drum in very sweet tunes. Everything was very pleasant.

30 All the citizens men, women, children and old folks assembled there to witness the performance.

31. O sage, on hearing the sweet songs, and seeing the delightful dance, the people entered into raptures of ecstacy.

32-35 Pārvatī became unconscious. She saw Śiva's handsome form, bearing trident and other symbols before her vision. He had smeared the ashes all over His body. He was wearing a garland of bones. His face was beaming with his shining three eyes. He had the sacred thread of a serpent. Exquisitely white in complexion, the handsome lord Śiva, the friend of the distressed, the ocean of mercy was repeating the words "Choose the boon (or the bridegroom)." On seeing Him thus in her mind she bowed to Him. Mentally she had chosen the boon when she had said, "Be my husband".

36. And He had granted her the auspicious boon with pleasure and vanished. The mendicant now continued the dance.

37. Menā who was greatly delighted took gems and jewels in gold vessels in order to give them to Him.

38. But the dancer did not accept the gifts. He requested for the hand of Pārvatī and began to dance and sing again.

39. Menā was surprised on hearing his words and she was furious. She rebuked the mendicant and wished to drive him out.

40. In the meantime the lord of mountains returned from the Gaṅgā. He saw the mendicant in the human form in his court-yard.

41. On hearing the details from Menā he became very angry. He ordered his attendants to drive out the dancer.

42. But O excellent sage, none of them could push him out as he was hot to the touch like a blazing fire and very brilliant.

43. O dear, then the mendicant who was clever at diverse sports showed his endless great power to the mountain.

44. The mountain saw him immediately transmuted in to the form of Viṣṇu the four-armed, with crown earrings and yellow garment.

45. Flowers etc. which had been offered to the mace-bearing lord, Viṣṇu, at the time of worship, he saw on the body and over the head of the mendicant.

46. Then the lord of mountains saw the four-faced deity, the creator of worlds, red in colour and reciting the Vedic hymns.

47. Then the lord of mountains saw the form of the sun, the eye of the universe, much to his enthusiastic amazement.

48. Then, O dear one, he saw him in the wonderful form of Śiva accompanied by Pārvatī. He was smiling and shining beautifully.

49. Then he saw him in the form of a mass of splendour of no specific shape. It was unsullied, free from peculiar attributes and desires. It was wonderfully formless.

50. Thus he saw many forms and features there. He was surprised and delighted much.

51. Then the chief of mendicants begged of Himavat

and Menā the hand of Pārvatī as alms. He, the source of great enjoyment did not accept anything else.

52-54. The lord of mountains deluded by Śiva's magic did not accede to this request. The mendicant too did not take anything. He vanished from the scene. Then Himavat and Menā realised that Śiva had deceived them and gone to His abode. After some pondering, they developed a feeling of devotion to Śiva who is the cause of salvation, the bestower of divine bliss.

CHAPTER THIRTYONE

(Description of Śiva's magic)

Brahmā said:—

1. On knowing their undistracted great devotion to Śiva, O Nārada, Indra and other gods, thought like this.

The gods said :—

2. If the mountain were to give his daughter to Śiva with singleminded devotion he will attain salvation immediately and will disappear from Bhārata.[45]

3. The mountain is the storehouse of endless gems. If he were to leave off the Earth and go, the name of the Earth—Ratnagarbhā (having gems in the womb)—shall be a misnomer.

4. He will cast off his immobile aspect and assume a divine form. He will give his daughter to the Trident bearing deity and will go to Śiva's region.

5. He will undoubtedly attain mergence into lord Śiva. having enjoyed pleasures there, he will attain salvation.

Brahmā said:—

6. Thinking like this and consulting one another they, in their bewilderment, decided to send god Bṛhaspati there.

45. Bhārata, the land of Bharatas, derives its name from the Bharatas, an ancient powerful Aryan tribe mentioned in the Ṛgveda.

7. O Nārada, then Indra and other gods, went to Bṛhaspati's abode lovingly with humility, in their eagerness to achieve their self-interest.

8. Reaching there, all the gods including Indra bowed to Bṛhaspati and submitted every detail to him.

The gods said :—

9. O revered preceptor, please go to the abode of Himavat for the fulfilment of our task. After going there, you shall make disparaging remarks about the trident-bearing deity.

10-11. Pārvatī will not marry any other person except Śiva. The mountain will derive the benefit only after sometime if he gives the daughter in marriage without his full concurrence. Let the mountain stay on earth for the present. O preceptor, you shall make him stay on the earth as he is the support of many gems.

Brahmā said :—

12. On hearing these words of the gods, the preceptor of the gods, plugged his ears with his hands. He did not accept the proposal of the gods. He remembered the name "Śiva".

13. Then remembering lord Śiva, Bṛhaspati[40] of liberal mind rebuked the gods again and again and said.

Bṛhaspati said :—

14. All of you gods seem to be selfish in nature. You want to destroy other's interests. Indeed I will go to hell by disparaging Śiva.

15. O gods, one of you shall go to the mountain. Let him urge the lord of the mountains and achieve the desired object.

16. Let him stay in Bhārata after giving his daughter without willingness. It is certain he will attain salvation if he gives his daughter with devotion.

17. Afterwards the seven celestial sages will properly

46. Bṛhaspati is designated as the family priest of divine community. He is the preceptor of the gods and intercedes on their behalf with the triad—Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva, seeking their support.

persuade the mountain. Except Pināka-bearing deity, Pārvatī will not marry any other person.

18. Or, O gods, all of you go to Brahmā's region taking Indra with you. Tell Brahmā all your details. He will get your work done immediately.

Brahmā said :—

19. On hearing it and consulting among themselves the gods came to my Assembly. After duly bowing to me they informed me about the details.

20. On hearing the words of the gods about censuring Śiva, O sage, I the reciter of the Vedas spoke to them in an aggrieved tone.

21. "Dear children, I am incompetent to decry Śiva. It is unbearable. It destroys all riches. It is the seed of all adversities.

22. O gods, all of you go to Kailāsa and propitiate Śiva. Make Him go to Himavat's abode quickly.

23. Let him approach the lord of mountains and make disparaging remarks about Himself. Rebuking others is conducive to destruction. Rebuking oneself is conducive to fame".

24. On hearing my words, all the gods, joyously bowed to me and went to Kailāsa, the chief of mountains.

25. Going there and seeing Śiva they bowed to Him with bent heads and palms joined in reverence. The gods eulogised Śiva.

The gods said :—

26. O great lord, lord of gods, O Śiva, the merciful, we seek refuge in you. Be sympathetic. Obeisance be to you.

27. O lord, you are favourably disposed to your devotees, always carrying out their tasks. You are the uplifter of the distressed, and an ocean of mercy. You save us from all our miseries and distresses.

Brahmā said :—

28. Eulogising lord Śiva thus, Indra and other gods respectfully submitted all the details.

29. On hearing the words of the gods, lord Śiva agreed to the proposal. He made the gods return after assuring them smilingly.

30. Hastening to their abodes, the gods rejoiced much considering their work fully fulfilled and praising Sadāśiva.

31 Then the lord Śiva who is favourably disposed to his devotees, the lord of magic and free from aberrations went to the lord of mountains.

32-33. When the lord of the mountains was seated in his royal assembly along with Pārvatī and kinsmen, Sadāśiva came there, in the meantime bearing a staff and an umbrella. He was dressed in divine clothes and had a shining mark on the forehead.

34. He was in the guise of a saintly brahmin. He was repeating the name of Viṣṇu with devotion. He had the garland of crystal beads in his hand and the Śālagrama stone round his neck.

35. On seeing that extraordinary guest, Himavat with his attendants stood up in reverence and prostrated before him with devotion.

36. Pārvatī bowed with devotion to her dear lover in the guise of a brahmin. On realising him mentally the goddess eulogised him with great joy.

37. With great pleasure Śiva bestowed his blessings on all. O dear, He bestowed on Pārvatī her cherished desire in addition.

38. The brahmin received with pleasure the articles of homage[47] etc. offered by Himavat, the lord of mountains.

39. O sage, after duly worshipping the excellent brahmin with pleasure, the mountain Himavat enquired of his welfare.

40. Again, the lord of mountains asked him "Who are you, please ?" Immediately the chief of brahmins, spoke to the lord of mountains thus.

The chief of brahmins said:—

41. O foremost among mountains, I am a brahmin

47. Madhuparka is a mixture of honey, butter, sugar, curd and water offered to a guest when he first comes to the house.

devotee of Viṣṇu, and a great scholar. My occupation is that of a match-maker. I roam about on the earth.

42. I go where I wish. I go everywhere. By the power of my preceptor I am omniscient. I am simple-minded and by nature I help others and I am sympathetic and quell aberrations.

43. I have come to know that you desire to give your daughter to Śiva, this daughter so tender like a lotus flower, of divinely excellent form and endowed with all accomplishments.

44-47. To Śiva—who has no support, who is devoid of associations, who is deformed, who is without attributes, who resides in the cremation-ground, who has the form of a snake-catcher, who is a Yogin, who is naked, who has deficient limbs, who wears snakes as his ornaments, whose name and pedigree are unknown, whose conduct is bad, who has no sport, whose body is smeared with ashes, who is furious, who lacks in discrimination, whose age is not known, whose matted hair is ill worn, who supports all who roam about, who has garland of snakes who is a mendicant, who is engaged in following wrong-paths and who tenaciously discards the Vedic path.

48. O mountain, this inclination of yours is not at all conducive to auspiciousness. O foremost among the wise, born of Nārāyaṇa's family, learn sense.

49. For the marriage of Pārvatī, He is not at all a deserving person. On hearing of this, the general public will smile in derision.

50. O lord of mountains, see for yourself. He has not a single kinsman. You are the storehouse of great gems and jewels. He has no assets at all.

51. O lord of mountains, you shall consult your kinsmen, sons, wife and wise counsellors, except Pārvatī.

52. O lord of mountains, the medicine does not appeal at all to the patient. Wrong diet that brings about great defects always appeals to him.

Brahmā said:—

53. Saying this, the brahmin stopped. He took food and left the place with pleasure for his abode. Śiva is one who quietly indulges in His divine sports.

CHAPTER THIRTYTWO

(The seven celestial sages arrive)

Brahmā said:—

1. On hearing the words of the brahmin, Menā spoke to Himavat with tears welling up in her eyes, due to grief and with the heart extremely dejected.

Menā said:—

2. O lord of mountains, please listen to my words conducive to happiness. Please consult important devotees of Śiva regarding what has been mentioned by the brahmin.

3. Many disparaging remarks about Śiva have been made by this brahminical devotee of Viṣṇu. O lord of mountains, on hearing these words, my mind is very much dejected.

4. O lord of mountains, I shall not give my daughter endowed with all good accomplishments to Śiva with ugly features, ignoble conduct and defiled name.

5. If you do not accede to my request, I shall undoubtedly die. I will immediately leave this house or swallow poison.

6. With a rope I shall tie Pārvatī round my neck and go to a thick forest. I would rather drown myself in the great ocean. I shall never give my daughter to him.

7. Saying thus with great grief, Menā entered the chamber of anger. Casting off her necklaces she lay down on the ground sighing and sobbing.

8. O dear, in the meantime all those seven celestial sages were remembered by Śiva whose mind was agitated by the pangs of separation from Pārvatī.

9. All those seven sages,[48] as soon as they were remembered by Śiva, came there in person as though they were another set of wish-yielding Kalpa trees.

10. Arundhatī too came there as though she was an achievement personified. On seeing them resplendent like the sun, Śiva stopped his recitation of mantras.

11. O sage, standing in front of Śiva and bowing to

48. On the seven sages, see Note 164 P. 163.

and eulogising Him, the seven sages of great austerity considered themselves blessed.

12. Then, as they were struck with surprise, they joined their palms in reverence, bowed to and addressed Śiva adored by all the worlds:—

13. The sages said:—"O most excellent of all, O great ruler, O Emperor of the heaven-dwellers, how can our fortune which is very excellent be described by us ?

14-15. Formerly we had performed three kinds of penance; we had studied the excellent Vedas ; we had made offerings in the fire, we had visited many holy centres; thus whatever merit we have acquired verbally, mentally and physically that entire merit has now accrued to us by your blessing in remembering us.

16. A man who worships you always shall be blessed. How can that merit be properly described, the merit of those whom you yourself remember ?

17. O Sadāśiva, we have become the most excellent of all people by your remembering us. Usually you never even come across the path of ambitions and aspirations of ordinary people.

18-19. O lord, your vision, very difficult to be acquired, is like the fruit stooping down within the reach of the dwarf, like sight to a man born blind, like eloquency acquired by a dumb man, like the indigent meeting with a treasure-trove, like the lame man reaching the top of a high mountain and like the barren woman bearing a child.

20. By seeing you today we have become the most respectable sages worthy of the worship of all the worlds. We have reached the highest position.

21. O lord of gods, by seeing you who are the lord of all gods we have become worthy of great respect. There is no necessity of talking more.

22. If any duty is assigned to us it will be a favour to us. An auspicious task befitting us, your utter slaves, shall be given to us.

Brahmā said :—

23. On hearing their words, Śiva the great lord, in conformity with the conventions of the world, spoke these

pleasant words:—

Śiva said :—

24. Sages are always to be adored and particularly you all. O brahmins, it was for a specific reason that you have been summoned here.

25. My attitude of being helpful is known to you. That must be achieved, especially in the interest of the fulfilment of the desires of the world.

26. Cause for great misery has arisen for the gods at the hands of Tāraka the wicked. Boon has already been granted. He is invincible. What shall I do ?

27. O great sages, all the eight cosmic bodies[49] that I possess are not for furthering my self-interest, they are for helping the wide world.

28-29. A great penance has been performed by Pārvatī. That cannot be performed even by great sages. I have to give her the great fruit thereof. Indeed my vow is to render delight to my devotees. The fruit I bestow on her shall be conducive to her welfare. Hence I wish to marry her.

30. At the request of Pārvatī I went to the abode of the mountain in the guise of a mendicant. Clever in divine sports I thereby sanctified her.

31. On hearing to know that I am the supreme Brahman, the couple were desirous of giving me their daughter with great devotion in accordance with the Vedic manner.

32. On the inducement of the gods, in order to reduce the quality of devotion (of Himavat and Menā) I took the guise of a devotee of Viṣṇu and rebuked myself.

33. O sages, on hearing it they were dejected and have now lost interest in me and do not wish to give their daughter to me.

34. Hence you all go to the abode of Himavat and urge the excellent mountain and his wife.

35. Speak out the words as venerable as the Vedas. Do everything necessary to get the matter straightened out and settled.

36. O excellent ones, I wish to marry their daughter.

49. On the eightfold image of Śiva, see Note 89 P. 132.

I have agreed to marry her and have already granted her that boon.

37. What is the use of talking too much ? Himavat must be convinced. Menā too must be convinced similarly, so that the purpose of the gods shall be served well.

38. Whatever mode is selected by you shall be more than necessary. The task is yours. You alone are the sharers of the credit.

Brahmā said :—

39. On hearing these words, the seven sages of pure mind became delighted and thought themselves blessed by the lord.

40. "We have become blessed and contented in every respect. We have become venerable to every one, especially adorable.

41. He who is worthy of being respected by Brahmā and Viṣṇu, he who secures everything accomplished is sending us, his emissaries on an errand that is conducive to the happiness of all the worlds.

42. He is the master of the worlds and their father. She is considered the mother. Let this proper alliance increase for ever like the moon".

43. Saying thus the celestial sages bowed to Śiva and went by aerial path in the direction of the city of Himavat.

44. On seeing that city of heavenly splendour, the sages were surprised. Expatiating on their good fortune they spoke to one another.

The sages said :—

45. We are really blessed and meritorious in being able to see this city[50] because we have been engaged in a task like this.

46. This city seems to be better than Alakā,[51] heaven,[52]

50. Himavatpura is probably identical with Auṣadhiprastha, the capital of Himavat. See Note 10. P. 490.

51. See Note 226 P. 265.

52. It signifies the heaven of Indra which is supposed to be situated on Mount Meru.

Bhogavatī[53] and even Amarāvatī[54].

47. The houses are beautiful and well-built. The courtyards are well laid out and paved with different kinds of crystals and jewels of variegated colours.

48. Slabs of solar and lunar stones are found in every house. Different kinds of celestial trees are also growing here.

49. The splendour of festoons is also seen in every house. They are of different colours and sorts with shapes of parrots and swans carved on the walls of the palaces.

50. The canopies with hanging festoons are of diverse character. There are many lakes and ponds.

51. The gardens and parks are of various kinds frequented by delighted people. Here men are like gods and the women are like the celestial damsels.

52. In the land of activities (i.e. Bhārata), the sacrificial priests and the followers of Purāṇas perform holy rites with a desire to attain heaven. That is in vain because they have left off the city of Himavat.

53. Men are eager to go to heaven only as long as this city is not seen. O brahmins, when this city is seen what is the use of heaven?

Brahmā said :—

54. Describing the city thus all those excellent sages went to the rich and well-furnished abode of Himavat.

55. On seeing those seven sages, resplendent like the sun, coming along the aerial path from a distance, Himavat was surprised and said :—

Himavat said :—

56. The seven venerable persons, resplendant like the sun, are approaching me. These sages shall be worshipped by me now.

57. We householders are really blessed, to whom great men like these, bestowing happiness on all, pay their visit.

53. It is the subterranean capital of the Nāgas in the Nāgaloka portion of Pātāla.

54. It refers to the famous city of Indra, supposed to be situated on Mount Meru.

Brahmā said :—

58. In the meantime they descended on the ground from the sky. On seeing them Himavat advanced to welcome them.

59. With palms joined in reverence he bowed to them with stooping shoulders and worshipped them with due respect and honour.

60. Desiring welfare of others, the seven sages embraced Himavat, the lord of mountains and spoke words of auspicious blessings with pleasant faces.

61. Keeping them ahead he said—"My household life is blessed". With great devotion he got and offered them seats.

62. When they were duly seated, he too sat with their permission. Then Himavat spoke to the refulgent sages :—

Himavat said :—

63-64. I am blessed. I am contented. My life is fruitful. I am the best person worthy of being seen in the three worlds. I am as pure as any of the holy centres. All this is because you, verily in lord Viṣṇu's forms, have come to my abode. Perfect ones such as you, what special purpose can there be in visiting poor persons like me ?

65. Still I am your servant. Some task there may be to be entrusted to me. Mercifully may it be spoken out. May my life be fruitful.

CHAPTER THIRTYTHREE

(*The appeasement of Himavat*)

The sages said :—

1. Śiva is the father of the universe. Pārvatī is the mother of the universe. Hence your daughter shall be given to Śiva, the supreme soul.

2. O Himālaya, by this activity your life will be

fruitful. You will become the venerable person of the most venerable in the universe. There is no doubt about it.

Brahmā said :—

3. O great sage, on hearing these words of the seven sages, the lord of the mountains bowed to them with joined palms and spoke thus.

Himavat said :—

4. O ye seven sages of great enlightenment, what you have just now said has been already cherished by me by the will of Śiva.

5. Now, a certain brahmin professing Vaiṣṇava cult came here and spoke very critically about Śiva.

6. Ever since, the mother Pārvatī has gone out of sense. Hences she does not wish her daughter's marriage with Śiva.

7. She has entered the chamber of anger. She is aggrieved and her clothes have become dirty. O brahmins, her obduracy is so great that she does not pay heed to any advice.

8. I too am, you can say, out of sense. I am telling you the truth. I do not wish to give my daughter to Śiva who is apparently a mendicant.

Brahmā said:—

9. O sage, after saying these words, the king of mountains deluded by Śiva's magic became silent and sat amidst the sages.

10. The seven celestial sages praised the magic of Śiva and sent Arundhatī[55] to Menakā.

11. Then at the bidding of her husband Arundhatī, the bestower of knowledge, went quickly to the place where Menā and Pārvatī were sitting.

12. After going in she saw Menā lying in her grief. The chaste lady spoke to her these carefully selected sweet and wholesome words :—

55. She is the wife of Vasiṣṭha, one of the seven sages. In Hindu Mythology she is regarded as the highest pattern of conjugal excellence and wifely devotion.

Arundhatī said:—

13. O Menakā, get up. O chaste lady, I, Arundhatī, have come to your house. The seven sages of sympathetic nature have also come.

Brahmā said:—

14. On hearing Arundhatī's voice, Menā got up quickly and bowed to her who was on a par with Lakṣmī in her brilliance.

Menā said:—

15. Ha, what a meritorious thing is this ! We are blessed. Arundhatī, the daughter-in-law of the Creator of the universe, the wife of Vasiṣṭha, has come here.

16. O gentle lady, what for is your visit now ? Please tell me specifically. My daughter and I are your slaves. Be merciful to us.

Brahmā said :—

17. Arundhatī, the chaste lady thus addressed, advised her in various ways and returned to the place where the sages were seated.

18. Then they began to advise the lord of the mountains, after thinking on the feet of Śiva. They were clever in speech and they spoke respectfully.

The sages said:—

19. O lord of the mountains, may our words, the cause of everything auspicious, be heard. Give Pārvatī to Śiva. Become the father-in-law of the world-destroyer.

20. For the destruction of Tāraka, formerly Brahmā requested Śiva who is the lord of all and who does not beg of any one, to strive for this alliance.

21. Śiva, the foremost of Yogins was not eager to marry. But since requested by Brahmā, the lord agreed to take your daughter.

22. Pārvatī performed a penance and the lord promised her. Thus for these two reasons the lord of Yogins wishes to marry her.

Brahmā said :—

23. On hearing the words of the sages, Himavat laughed but he was a little frightened. He spoke with humility.

Himavat said:—

24. I do not see any royal paraphernalia with Śiva, He has none to support him. He has no assets. He has no kinsman.

25. I do not wish to give my daughter to a Yogin who is extremely detached. O ye sons of the Creator of the Vedas tell me decisively.

26. If a father were to give his daughter in marriage to an unsuitable person, out of love, delusion, fear or covetousness, he is doomed. He will go to hell.

27. Out of my own free will, I will not give her to the trident-bearing Śiva. O sages, whatever arrangement is befitting here, may kindly be carried out.

Brahmā said:—

28. O excellent sages, on hearing these words of the mountain Himavat, Vasiṣṭha[56], the most eloquent among them replied:—

Vasiṣṭha said:—

29. O lord of mountains, listen to my words in every respect conducive to your welfare; they are not against virtue. They are true and shall bring about your joy here and hereafter.

30. Statements, in ordinary language and in the Vedas, are of three forms. A scholar knowing all lores understands them by means of his pure vision of knowledge.

31. It is only an enemy, though keen in intellect, who says what is pleasing to the ears now but what transpires to be untrue and unwholesome afterwards. He never speaks wholesome things.

56. Vasiṣṭha was one of the seven great sages and one of the ten Prajāpatis. There are several accounts about his origin. He is declared to have been either a mind-born son of Brahmā or the son of Mitra and Varuṇa from Urvaśī.

32. Only a virtuous and sympathetic friend will speak such words as are unpleasant in the beginning but conducive to happiness in the end.

33. But the third variety of behaviour nectarlike to the ears, conducive to happiness on all occasions, essential and truthful is considered to be the most excellent.

34. O mountain, these are the three types of behaviour as mentioned in the treatises on polity. Tell me which type of behaviour shall I adopt to please you.

35. Śiva, the lord of gods, is devoid of riches created by Brahmā. But His mind is engrossed in the ocean of true knowledge.

36. How can lord Śiva who is knowledge-Bliss Himself have any desire for articles created by Brahmā ? An ordinary householder gives his daughter to one who has a kingdom and riches in his possession ?

37. By offering his daughter to a miserable person, a father may be guilty of slaughtering his daughter. Who can think Śiva miserable whose servant is Kubera ?

38. He is attributeless, supreme soul, great lord and greater than Prakṛti. He can create and annihilate things by a mere sportive touch of His eyebrows.

39. His manifestations are threefold, He is the cause of creation sustenance and annihilation in the names of Brahmā Viṣṇu and Śiva.

40. Brahmā stays in Brahmaloka, Viṣṇu in the milk ocean, Śiva in Kailāsa, all these are the attributes of Śiva.

41. The primordial nature, born of Śiva, maintains threefold forms in the creative activity, partially out of sport with diverse digits.

42 Vāṇī, the deity presiding over the activity of speech, is born of his mouth ; Lakṣmī, in the form of riches, is born out of his chest.

43. Pārvatī manifested herself in the splendours of the gods. After killing all the demons she granted riches and glory to the gods.

44. In another Kalpa she was born of the womb of Dakṣa's wife. Her name was Satī. She attained Śiva. Dakṣa gave her to Him.

45. By her Yogic power she cast off her body on hearing

about the insult to her husband. She is now born of you in the womb of Menā.

46. This Pārvatī is the wife of Śiva in every birth. In every Kalpa she is the great cosmic intellect, mother of wise men.

47. She is victorious always in the form of Siddhā, the bestower of Siddhi (achievement) and is Siddhi personified. Śiva carefully preserves the bones and ashes from the funeral pyre of Satī.

48. Hence, you give your daughter, this gentle lady to Śiva out of your own free will. Otherwise she will herself go and surrender herself as his beloved wife.

49. Taking the firm decision on seeing her innumerable sufferings He came to the place of your daughter's penance in the guise of a brahmin.

50. After consoling her and granting her the boon He returned to His abode. It was for complying with her request that Śiva requested you for the hand of Śivā, O mountain.

51. Both of you had accepted the proposal as you were drawn by devotion to Śiva. O lord of mountains, how is it that your mind has taken a somersault now ? Please tell me.

52. On being requested by the gods, the lord has sent us, the sages and Arundhatī to you.

53. O mountain, we instruct you plainly. By giving Pārvatī to Śiva you will meet with great bliss.

54. O lord of mountains, even if you do not give Pārvatī to Śiva out of your own free will, their marriage will take place as a result of the inexorable workings of fate.

55. O dear one, Śiva has already granted Pārvatī the boon at the time of her penance. A promise of Śiva cannot be turned topsyturvy.

56. Oh ! even the promise of ordinary good men acting under the guidance of Śiva cannot be transgressed in all the worlds. O mountain, what then about that of Śiva Himself.

57. Working singlehanded, Lord Indra chopped off the wings of mountains as though at play. Pārvatī too sportively broke the peak of Meru.

58. All riches can be sacrificed, O lord of mountains, for the sake of a single entity, but the eternal Śruti has it that one should forsake a single entity for the sake of a unit.

59. When danger was imminent at the hands of a brahmin, the chief of kings, Anaraṇya[67], saved his entire asset by giving his daughter to him.

60. When he was threatented by the curse of brahmin his preceptors, wise kinsmen and people well-versed in the science of polity advised him hastily.

61. O king of mountains, you too save your kinsmen by giving your daughter to Śiva. You can claim thus the gods too to your side.

Brahmā said :—

62. On hearing the words of Vasiṣṭha, Himavat, with a dejected heart but laughing outwardly asked him about the details of the story of the king.

Himavat said :—

63. O brahmin, what is the race to which the king Anaraṇya belonged ? How did he save his assets by giving his daughter ?

Brahmā said :—

64. On hearing these words of the mountain, Vasiṣṭha became glad and told him the details of the interesting story of the king.

CHAPTER THIRTYFOUR

(*The Story of Anaraṇya*)

Vasiṣṭha said :—

1. The king Anaraṇya hailed from the race of the fourteenth Manu Indrasāvarni.

57. According to ŚP. RS. Section III ch. 34, the King Anaraṇya belonged to the lineage of the fourteenth Manu called Indra-Sāvarṇi. He is said to have performed a hundred horse-sacrifices with Bhṛgu as his officiating priest but did not accept Indra-hood.

2. The great king Anaraṇya, born of Maṅgalāraṇya* was very strong. He was a special devotee of Śiva and ruled over the seven continents[58].

3. Having Bhṛgu as his priest he performed a hundred sacrifices. He did not accept the position of Indra even when offered by the gods.

4. O Himavat, hundred sons were born to him and a beautiful daughter Padmā who was equal to Lakṣmī.

5. O excellent mountain, he was more fond of his daughter than of his hundred sons.

6. He had five queens who were endowed with great qualities and fortunes and were loved by him over and above his life.

7. The girl entered the prime of her youth in her father's palace. The king issued letters of invitation for the requisition of good bridegrooms.

8. In the meantime the sage Pippalāda eagerly hastening back to his hermitage saw a certain Gandharva in an isolated place in the penance-grove.

9. The Gandharva was an expert in the science of erotics. He was in the company of a woman. He was therefore completely submerged in the ocean of pleasure, sexual dalliance and was lusty.

10. On seeing him the great sage became very lustful. He lost interest in penance and began to think of acquiring a wife.

11. Thus the good sage spent a long time with his mind utterly agitated by pangs of love.

12. Once while the good sage was on his way to the river Puṣpabhadrā** for taking his bath he happened to see the young maiden Padmā who was as charming as goddess Lakṣmī.

13. The sage asked the persons standing by—"Who is this girl ?" The people, afraid of the curse bowed to the sage and replied.

*Contrast Pargiter AIHS PP. 143, 246. Anaraṇya was born of Sambhūta.

** It has not been possible to identify this river.

58. It is a division of the terrestrial world. The number of these divisions varies according to different authorities. It is usually seven. These are situated round the mountain Meru like the petals of a lotus flower and each being separated from the other by a distinct ocean. The central one is Jambudvīpa in which is included Bharata Khaṇḍa (India).

The people said :—

14. This excellent lady, the repository of all good qualities, is the daughter of Anaraṇya and is called Padmā. She is another Lakṣmī (goddess of fortune). She is being wooed by great kings.

Brahmā said :—

15. On hearing the words of the people who spoke the truth, the sage became much agitated in the mind and was eager to possess her.

16. O mountain, the sage took bath and worshipped his favourite deity Śiva duly. The lustful sage went to the council-chamber of Anaraṇya for the sake of alms.

17. Immediately after seeing the sage, the king was struck with awe and bowed to him. He offered him homage (Madhuparka) * and devoutly worshipped him.

18. Out of love, the sage accepted everything and ultimately requested for the hand of his daughter. The king kept quiet, being unable to give any decisive reply.

19. The sage repeated his request saying—"O great king, give me your daughter. Otherwise in a trice I will reduce everything to ashes".

20. The king and his attendants were overwhelmed by the splendour of the sage. Staring at the old emaciated brahmin, they began to cry.

21. The queens, knowing not what shall be done, lamented. The chief queen, the mother of the girl, fell unconscious in the excess of her grief.

22. The brothers of the girl were agitated with sorrow. O lord of mountains, everything and every one connected with the king was overwhelmed with grief.

23. In the meantime the wise brahmin, the excellent preceptor of the king, as well as his intelligent priest came there.

24. The king bowed to them and paid homage. He cried before them. He explained to them everything and asked them what was the proper step to be taken immediately.

*See Note 47 P. 600

25-26. The brahmin, the preceptor of the king and the scholarly priest were experts in sacred lore and polity. They advised the king in that matter.

The preceptor and the priest said :—

27. O wise king, listen to our beneficial words. Do not be anxious. In the company of your kinsmen turn your good attention to the sacred texts.

28. O king, whether today or after a year, the princess is to be given to a deserving person, a brahmin or anyone else.

29. In the three worlds we do not see more deserving person than this brahmin. Give your daughter to this sage and save your riches.

30. O king, if all riches face the danger of destruction due to one object or person, the wise man saves everything by abandoning that object or person unless it be that who has sought refuge.

Vasiṣṭha said:—

31. On hearing the words of the wise, the king lamented again and again but ultimately offered his daughter fully bedecked in ornaments to the excellent sage.

32. O mountain, accepting and marrying the beautiful maiden Padmā, on a par with goddess Lakṣmī, in accordance with holy laws, the delighted sage returned to his abode.

33. After giving his daughter to an old man, the king was much dejected in mind. Abandoning everything he went to the forest for performing penance.

34. O mountain, when the king went to the forest, the queen, passed away, due to the pangs of separation from her husband and daughter.

35. Without the king, the respectable sons and officers of the king became unconscious. The other people thinking that the king was dead lamented much.

36. Anaraṇya went to the forest, performed great penance, and worshipped Śiva with devotion. In the end, he attained Śivaloka free from all ailments.

37. The eldest son of the king, Kīrtimān, virtuously ruled over the kingdom and tended the subjects like his own children.

38. Thus, O mountain, I have narrated to you the auspicious story of Anaraṇya, how he saved his race and his wealth by offering his daughter to the sage.

39. O king of mountains, you too, give your daughter to Śiva, save the entire family and keep even the gods under your control.

CHAPTER THIRTYFIVE

(*The story of Padmā and Pippalāda*)

Nārada said:—

1. O dear, what did the excellent mountain do after hearing the anecdote of Anaraṇya and the marriage of his daughter ? Please tell me.

Brahmā said :—

2. After hearing the story of Anaraṇya including the anecdote of the offer of his daughter, the lord of mountains again asked Vasiṣṭha with palms joined in reverence.

The lord of mountains said :—

3. O leading sage Vasiṣṭha, O son of Brahmā, O merciful one, you have narrated the wonderful story of Anaraṇya.

4. What did Padmā, the daughter of Anaraṇya, do after marrying sage Pippalāda. Please mention her story fully.

Vasiṣṭha said:—

5-6 The very old and venerable sage Pippalāda returned to his hermitage along with his wife Padmā and passed time in pleasure. He was not too much sensuous. He continued to perform his penance and holy rites in the forest and on the mountain.

7. The daughter of Anaraṇya served the sage devoutly physically, mentally and verbally like Lakṣmī serving Viṣṇu.

8. Once Dharma (Virtue) assumed the guise of a king by his magical power and happened to see on the way that lady of gentle smiles going to the celestial river for her holy dip.[59]

59. Cf. Note 39 P. 579.

9-10. The lord Dharma was seated in a beautiful chariot studded with gems. He was bedecked in many kinds of ornaments. He was in the prime of fresh youth, glorious and lustrous like the cupid. On seeing Padmā he spoke thus, in order to know the innermost feelings of the sage's wife.

Dharma said :—

11. O beautiful woman, you are Lakṣmī herself; you are charming, you are worthy of a king; you are in the very prime of youth; you will be ever young; you are a lovely sweet lady.

12. I am telling you the truth, O slender-limbed lady. You lack lustre and colour in the presence of the sage Pippalāda who is old and weak.

13. Cast off that ruthless old brahmin always engaged in penances. Look up to me a great king, heroic in sexual dalliance and agitated by Kāma.

14. A beautiful woman acquires beauty as a result of the merit of a previous birth. The beauty becomes completely fruitful only after embracing a man of aesthetic taste.

15. I am the lover of a thousand beautiful women. I am an expert in the erotic science and literature. Abandon that husband and make me your slave.

16. You can indulge in sexual dalliance in the beautiful secluded forests, mountains and banks of rivers in my company. Make your life fruitful.

Vasiṣṭha said :—

17. Saying this, he got down and was eager to catch her hands. The chaste lady then addressed him thus.

Padmā said:—

18. Away, away, go away you sinful king. If you cast your lustful ogles at me you will be doomed in a trice.

19. How can I resort to you, lecherous and mad after women, after forsaking the excellent sage Pippalāda whose body is sanctified by austerities?

20. By the very touch of a person under the influence of women all merits are destroyed. He is a great sinner. His very sight promotes sins.

21. Even if he performs holy rites, a person succumbing to the viles of women is always impure. The manes, the gods and all men despise him.

22. Of what avail is knowledge, penance, repetition of sacred mantras, sacrifice, adoration, learning and charitable gift to him who is henpecked?

23. Since you spoke to me viewing me with the feelings that I am your wife although I ought to have been viewed as your mother, you will have a gradual decline as a result of my curse.

Vasiṣṭha said:—

24. On hearing the curse of the chaste woman, O lord of mountains, Dharma cast off the guise of a king and assumed his real form. Tremblingly he spoke thus—

Dharma said:—

25. O mother, know me as Dharma elderly and venerable to men of wisdom and preceptors. O chaste lady, I always consider other's wives as mothers.

26. It was to know your innermost feelings that I approached you. I knew your mind, still I was urged by fate.

27. Only proper suppression, not the contrary, is carried out by you. Chastisement of those who go astray from the right path is carried out by Śiva Himself.

28. Obeisance to Śiva who distributes happiness, misery, boons, prosperity or adversity on all.

29. Obeisance to Śiva who can make people enemies or friends, create affection or quarrel, to generate or destroy things.

30. Obeisance to Śiva who has made milk white, who has bestowed chillness on water and heat on fire.

31. Obeisance to Śiva, by whom the primordial nature, the principles Mahat etc, Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Siva and others are created.

Brahmā said:—

32. After saying thus Dharma, the most venerable god

in the universe stood in front of her, stunned but delighted at her chastity. But he did not say anything.

33. Princess Padmā, the chaste beloved of Pippalāda, O mountain, was surprised on realising that it was Dharma and said.

Padmā said :—

34. O Dharma, you are the ever present witness of all activities. O lord, why did you deign to deceive me to know my mind ?

35. O Dharma, what has been done already does not amount to any guilt on my part. You have been cursed in vain by me but it was due to my ignorance and innate nature of woman.

36. I am now thinking as to what shall be done about it. May that idea strike me whereby I may get peace.

37. This sky, these quarters and the winds may get destroyed but the curse of a chaste lady will never be destroyed.

38. In the Satyayuga you shine with all the legs, O king of gods, on all occasions, day or night, like the moon on a full moon night.

39. If you are destroyed, the annihilation of all creations will occur. But a sense of helpless despair is unnecessary. So I shall explain.

40. In the Tretāyuga, one leg shall be defunct, O excellent god. Another leg too shall be defunct in Dvāpara and the third one in the Kali age, O lord.

41. In the latter half of Kali, all the legs will be chopped off. Again in the Satyayuga you will attain perfection.

42. In the Satyayuga you will be all-pervasive and in the other Yugas partially so. Thus in accordance with the Yugas, you will be maintaining your position.

43. Let these words of mine be true and pleasing to you. I am now going to serve my husband. O lord, you return to your abode.

60. On the historical time as divided into four ages, called Yugas, see Note 32 P. 43.

Brahmā said :—

44. On hearing her words Dharma became delighted. Then Dharma, the son of Brahmā, spoke to the chaste lady who had been speaking to him.

Dharma said :—

45-46. O chaste lady, you are blessed, you are devotedly attached to your husband. Hail to you. Take this boon. Your husband is the cause of your great protection. Let him be a young man with sexual vigour and righteousness. He shall be comely in appearance, good in conduct, eloquent in speech and perpetually stable in youth.

47. Let him enjoy more longevity than Mārkaṇḍeya.[61] Let him be richer than Kubera. Let him enjoy more prosperity and power than Indra.

48. Let him be a devotee of Śiva on a par with Viṣṇu. Let him be a greater Siddha than Kapila[62]. Let him vie with Bṛhaspati in intelligence and with Brahmā in equanimity.

49. You will be blessed with all the fortunes of your master as long as you live. Also you will be perpetually young.

50. Undoubtedly you will become the mother of ten sons who will be greater than your husband, they will have all good qualities and live long.

51. O chaste lady, let your abode be endowed with all riches, brightly illuminated always and superior to even the abode of Kubera.

Vasiṣṭha said :—

52. O excellent mountain, after saying thus, Dharma stood quiet there. She circumambulated him, bowed to him and returned to her house.

53. Bestowing blessings upon her, Dharma returned to

61. He was the son of Mṛkaṇḍa, remarkable for his austerities and great age. He is represented as one of the seven persons who are considered to be 'deathless'. Cf.

अश्वत्थामा बलिर्व्यासो हनूमांश्च बिभीषण: ।
कृप: परशुरामश्च सप्तैते चिरजीविन: ॥

62. He is represented as a celebrated sage and a founder of the Sāṅkhya philosophy. He is said to have destroyed the hundred thousand sons of King Sagara with a glance.

his abode. He praised Padmā lovingly in every assembly he visited.

54. She sported about in secret with her husband who became a young man. She gave birth to sons who surpassed her husband in their good qualities.

55. All kinds of riches were granted to the couple increasing their happiness. They were conducive to the prosperity here and hereafter.

56. O lord of mountains, this ancient story of the couple has been narrated to you. You have heard the story with pleasure and respect.

57. Knowing the real situation give your daughter Pārvatī to Śiva. Cast off sins, O lord of mountains, in the company of your wife Menā.

58-61. After a week there is a very auspicious hour very rare to meet with. The presiding planet of the lagna is in the lagna. The moon is in conjunction with his son, Mercury as well as the constellation Rohiṇī[63]. The moon and the stars occupy pure positions. The month is Mārgaśīrṣa and the day is Monday free from all defects. All the planets are in auspicious conjunction. They are not aspected by the evil planets. The Jupiter is in a position that is conducive to the birth of a good child and all good fortune to the bridegroom. O lord of mountains, give your daughter Pārvatī, the mother of the universe, the primordial Being to Śiva, the father of the universe. You will then get quiet and contentment.

Brahmā said :—

62. After saying this, the excellent sage Vasiṣṭha, most excellent of wisemen, stopped after remembering lord Śiva, the creator of divine sports of diverse varieties.

63. Rohiṇī : the fourth of the lunar asterisms, the daughter of Dakṣa and the wife of the moon.

CHAPTER THIRTYSIX

(The statements of the seven sages)

Brahmā said:—

1. On hearing the words of the seven sages, Himācala, his wife and attendants were very much surprised. The lord of the mountains spoke to the other mountains.

Himācala said:—

2. O lord of mountains—Meru,[64] O Sahya[65] O Gandhamādana,[66] O Mandara,[67] O Maināka,[68] O Vindhya,[69] all of you listen to my words.

3. Vasiṣṭha says like this. It is to be considered what I shall do now. You consider well, decide and let me know.

Brahmā said:—

4. On hearing his words, Sumeru and other mountains decided carefully and spoke to Himālaya lovingly.

The mountains said:—

5. Of what avail is a long discussion and deliberation now? What should be done is only that. She is born only for the purpose of the gods.

6. Incarnating for the sake of Śiva, she shall be given to Śiva. Śiva has been propitiated by her and Śiva has also spoken to her.

64. The mountain stands in the centre of the earth and is described as the paricarp of the earth-lotus with great islands or continents forming its petals For details, see Note 217 P. 310.

65. Sahya is the name applied to that part of the Western Ghats which lies to the north of the Travancore hills.

66. Gandhamādana is that part of the Himālayas on which the Badarikāśrama is situated. See Note 309 P.405.

67. See Note 30 P. 561. For details see Note 36 P. 48.

68. Maināka: See Note 12 P. 491.

69. The name Vindhya is applied to the whole chain of hills running from Gujrat to the Gayā region and lying on both sides of the Narmadā river.

Brahmā said:—

7. On hearing the words of Meru and others, Himācala was greatly pleased and Pārvatī laughed within herself.

8. Arundhatī too convinced Menā with reasoned statements and examples from various mythological legends.

9. Then the wife of the mountain too was delightedly convinced. She entertained Arundhatī, the sages and the mountain with a grand feast and then took food herself.

10. Then the chief of mountains, freed from wrong notions and grown wise, spoke with palms joined in reverence and mind extremely delighted.

Himācala said:—

11. O fortunate sages, please listen to my words. All my bewilderment has vanished since I have heard the story of Śivā and Śiva.

12. Everything that I possess, my body, wife, Menā, sons, daughter, assets and achievements and other things belong to Śiva and not otherwise.

Brahmā said:—

13-14. After saying so, he bedecked his daughter with various ornaments. Then he took them all and placed them on the lap of the sage saying "These are the presents I have to give her."

The sages said:—

15. O mountain, you are the donor, Śiva is the mendicant, and the alms goddess Pārvatī. What else can be better than this ?

16. Since the course of your summits is befitting, you are blessed, you are the chief of all mountains, you are great in every respect.

Brahmā said:—

17. After saying thus, the sages of pure mind offered their blessings to the girl—"Be pleasing to Śiva."

18. They touched her with their hands and continued—"Everything will be well with you. As the moon in the bright half of the month, may your qualities increase."

19. After saying thus and offering fruits and flowers to the lord of mountains, the sages made him believe that the alliance was a settled fact.

20. The great chaste lady Arundhatī tempted Menā further with Śiva's good qualities.

21. According to the worldly convention they smeared the moustache of the mountain with powdered turmeric and saffron as an auspicious custom.

22. After fixing the auspicious Lagna for the marriage and congratulating and complimenting one another the sages came to Śiva's abode on the fourth day.

23. After reaching the place, Vasiṣṭha and other sages bowed to Śiva and eulogised Him with different hymns. They then spoke to lord Śiva.

The sages said:—

24. O lord Śiva, lord of the gods, O great lord Śiva, please listen lovingly to the narration of what we, your attendants, have done.

25. O great lord, the lord of mountains and Menā have been urged with different kinds of statements and examples from mythological legends. Undoubtedly he is enlightened.

26. Pārvatī has been betrothed to you by the lord of mountains. It is not otherwise. Now please start for the marriage with your attendants and the gods.

27. O great god, O lord, go to the abode of Himācala and marry Pārvatī in accordance with the customs for the sake of a son.

Brahmā said:—

28. On hearing their words, lord Śiva who was delighted and who loved to follow worldly conventions laughed and said:—

Lord Śiva said:—

29. O fortunate one, a marriage ceremony has never been witnessed nor even heard of by me before. The details of the same shall be mentioned by you all, specifically.

Brahmā said:—

30. On hearing these words in a worldly vein uttered by Śiva, they laughingly replied to Sadāśiva, lord of the gods.

The sages said:—

31-33. Please invite and summon Viṣṇu with his retinue, Brahmā with his sons, lord Indra,[70] all the sages, Yakṣas, Gandharvas, Kinnaras, Siddhas, Vidyādharas, heavenly nymphs and others. All of them will jointly accomplish everything for you. There is no doubt about it.

Brahmā said:—

34. Saying this and taking His permission the seven sages joyfully returned to their abodes praising the way of Śiva.

CHAPTER THIRTYSEVEN

(*The letter of betrothal is despatched, the requisites for the celebration are gathered and the mountain-invitees arrive*)

Nārada said :—

1. Dear wise father, when the seven sages returned what did Himācala do ? Please tell me, O lord.

Brahmā said:—

2. O great sage, I shall tell you what Himācala did, when the seven sages and Arundhatī left.

3. Bidding farewell to his brothers, Meru and others Himācala, the lord of mountains, rejoiced in the company of his sons, daughter and wife.

4. Urged by them lovingly, Himācala caused the letter of betrothal to be written by Garga, his priest.

70. Indra is called Śatakratu—'a God of hundred rites', for he achieves Indrahood—lordship of the gods—by performing one hundred horse-sacrifices.

5. He despatched the letter of betrothal to Śiva along with articles of homage through his kinsmen.

6. Those people arrived at Kailāsa and handed over the letter to Śiva after applying the holy mark on his forehead.

7. After being duly honoured by the lord, they returned highly delighted to the penance of the mountain.

8. On seeing those people who had been highly honoured by lord Śiva and who had returned excessively delighted, the mountain rejoiced much.

9. Then he extended his invitation highly pleasing to his kinsmen stationed in different places with great delight.

10. Then he began collecting foodstuffs and other requisite articles intended for the performance of the marriage.

11. Mountainous masses of rice, beaten rice, jaggery, sugar candies and salt were heaped up.

12. He caused huge tanks and receptacles built for milk, ghee and curds as well as for fried flour cakes of barley and other grains and ball-like sweets.

13. Big tanks and receptacles were made for the nectar, sugarcane juice, baked cakes, and the sugar candies.

14. Tanks were built for butter, spirituous beverages, sweet juices of various kinds and rice preparations of various sorts.

15. Different kinds of pickles and side dishes were prepared that might appeal to Śiva's Gaṇas and the gods. Different kinds of valuable garments purified in fire were kept ready.

16. Gems and jewels of different kinds, gold, silver and other articles were gathered duly.

17. Auspicious rites were started by the mountain on an auspicious day. The womenfolk of the mountain performed the purificatory ceremony for Pārvatī.

18. Women bedecked in ornaments performed auspicious rites. The delighted brahmin women of the city did everything in accordance with the tradition and custom.

19. Great festivities and holy auspicious rites were performed by the delighted Himavat too.

20-21. Delighted in every respect and eagerly awaiting the arrival of his kinsmen he was excited with various emotions. The invitees came there along with their wives, children and attendants. O celestial sage, listen to a detailed narration of the arrival of those mountains.

22-24. In order to increase the devotion to Śiva I shall explain in brief. Mandara, the chief mountain in heaven came to Himavat in a divine form. He was highly refulgent. He was accompanied by his wife and children. His company shone brilliantly. He had brought with him many gems and jewels.

25. Bringing with him many articles of presentation, the liberal Western mountain[71] reached there in a divine form.

26. The Eastern mountain came there with brilliant gems and jewels. He looked delighted and extremely brilliant,

27. The highly venerable lord of mountains, Malaya,[72] came there with his followers. He was happy with his excellent followers.

28. The mountain Dardura[73] came along with his wife. He was exquisitely dressed. He was delighted[74]. He had many attendants with him.

29. O dear, the delighted mountain Niṣadha came along with his attendants. He was very brilliant.

30. The fortunate mountain Gandhamādana came with great pleasure along with his children and womenfolk.

31. Mountains Karavīra[75] and Mahendra[76] of great wealth and prosperity also came there.

71. 'Asta' is a mythical sunset mountain in the West while 'udaya' is a mythical sunrise mountain in the East.

72. Malaya (derived from the Dravidian word malai meaning 'hill' was the name applied to the Travancore hills and the southernmost part of the Western ghats.

73. Dardura, variously spelt as Darddara or Darddura is identified with the Deogarh peak in the eastern part of the Vindhyas. G. E. Part I P. 104.

74. A mythic range of mountains lying south of Meru, but sometimes described as on the east. H. M P 24.

75. It has not been possible to identify this mountain.

76. Mahendra, the same as Mahendragiri, was the name applied to the Easteru Ghats.

32. Pāriyātra[77] came with attendants, children and womenfolk. He was brilliant and delighted. He had brought many gems and jewels with him.

33. Krauñca[78] the chief of mountains, came with a large army of attendants. He had articles of presentation with him. He was accompanied by his kinsmen and relatives.

34. Puruṣottama[79] mountain came with many presentation articles. He was highly honoured along with his followers.

35. The mountain Nīla[80] with plenty of wealth came along with his sons and womenfolk.

36. The mountains Trikūṭa,[81] Citrakūṭa,[82] Veṅkaṭa,[83] Śrīgiri,[84] Gokāmukha[85] and Nārada[86] came also.

37. The excellent mountain Vindhya[87] possessing many riches, came there delightedly along with his wife and sons.

38. The mountain Kālañjara,[88] highly resplendent and extremely delighted came along with his attendants.

39. The mountain Kailāsa favouring every one because of brilliant lord Śiva came there delighted.

40. All other mountains from several continents, O brahmin, assembled together in the abode of Himavat.

77. Pāriyātra or Pāripātra was the name applied to the Western Vindhyas together with the Aravelly range.

78. Krauñch is the name of a mythical mountain said to be the grandson of Himālaya who was pierced by Kārtikeya and Paraśurāma.

79. It is a sacred hill of Orissa associated with lord Viṣṇu styled as Puruṣottama.

80. Nīlagiri, "the Blue Mountain" seems to be the Nīlādri or Nīlakūṭa, the name of the "Kāmākhyā hill" according to the Kālikāpurāṇa 79. 74. Cf. Śaktisaṅgama tantra III. 7. 10.

81. A mountain in Ceylon on the top of which was situated Laṅkā, the capital of Rāvaṇa.

82. Chitrakūṭa is a mountain near Prayāga.

83. Veṅkata--a famous hill in the south, which is the seat of Viṣṇu.

84. Shrīgiri or Śrīśaila is situated in Telangana. Cf Śaktisaṅgamatantra III. 7. 14.

85. Gokāmukha is probably the same as Kokāmukha. It is a range of the Himālayas located in Nepal. Cf Varāhapurāṇa 140; GAMI Ch. XVII.

86. Coming in the list of mountains it signifies a mountain which has not been identified so far.

87. See Note 69. P. 623.

88. It is a sacred hill in Banda District in U.P.

41. O sage, all these mountains, invited by Himavat came there to attend the marriage of Śiva and Śivā.

42. The brilliant rivers, Śoṇabhadra[89] and others came delightfully to be present at the marriage of Śiva and Śivā.

43. All the rivers bedecked in ornaments came lovingly in divine forms at the marriage of Śiva and Śivā.

44. The rivers Godāvarī,[90] Yamunā,[91] Brahmastrī[92] and Veṇikā[93] came to attend the marriage of Śiva and Śivā.

45. With great pleasure Gaṅgā too, assuming a divine form and fully bedecked in ornaments came to attend the marriage of Śiva and Śivā.

46. The best of rivers Narmadā,[94] daughter of Rudra, came joyfully and quickly to attend the marriage of Śiva and Śivā.

47. The entire city of Himavat was full of excitement and ardent fervour when the invitees gathered there together.

48. Great festivities went on in the city. Banners, flags and festoons shone everywhere. The canopies hid the sunlight.

49. Himavat welcomed them with great delight and reverence. The mountains and the rivers, the gents and the ladies were duly received.

50. He housed them suitably in separate places. They were gratified with the amenities provided by Himavat.

89. Śoṇabhadra most probably is the same as Aruṇācala in the South Arcot District. See Avasthi: Studies in Sk. P. P. 142.

90. Godāvarī. See Note 56 P. 75.

91. Yamunā. See Note 67 P. 76.

92. The river Brahmastrī can be identified with the river Sarasvatī See Note 35 P. 47.

93. See Note 57 P. 75.

94. See Note 55 P. 75.

CHAPTER THIRTYEIGHT

(*Description of the dais*)

Brahmā said :—

1. Then the lord of mountains, O excellent sage, attended to the decoration of the entire city befitting the great festivities ahead.

2. The roads were watered and swept clean. At every door, stumps of plantain trees and other auspicious symbols were fixed.

3. The courtyard was embellished with plantain trees tied with silken cords. There were festoons of mango leaves.

4. Festoons with garlands of jasmine flowers shone, everywhere. Other articles of auspicious portent were fixed in every quarter.

5. These and other things were carried out by Himavat for the sake of his daughter. Every activity was supervised by Garga of great ability. Everything auspicious worth mentioning found a place there.

6. He called Viśvakarman[95] and requested him to erect a large and spacious dais beautiful with side rostrums, altars etc.

7. The dais, O celestial sage, was ten thousand Yojanas wide. It was wonderfully constructed and had all the characteristic features.

8. All the mobile and immobile objects of the world were represented there with realistic appearance. Everything was wonderfully portrayed.

9. The mobile objects presented there surpassed the immobile ones and the immobile ones surpassed the mobile ones in excellence.

10. The watery places presented there excelled the solid grounds. Even experts could not distinguish what was water and what was solid ground.

11. There were artificial lions. There were rows of

95. See Note 301 P. 401; Note 295 P. 389.

storks. There were artificial peacocks, but very beautiful in appearance.

12. Artificial women were represented as dancing with artificial men casting wistful glances at them and enchanting them.

13. Beautiful representations of gatekeepers with uplifted bows in their hands appeared like real originals.

14. The statue of Mahālakṣmī at the main entrance appeared like the goddess just emerged from the milk-ocean. It was because all the characteristics were complete.

15. Elephants with their mahouts and horses with their riders were so natural that none would say that they were artificial.

16. Chariots were driven by charioteers, other vehicles by other drivers. There were foot-solidiers too. All of them were artificial.

17. O sage, Viśvakarman was so delighted that he made all these things to fascinate the visiting dignitaries, the gods and the sages.

18. O sage, the statue of Nandin, at the portals, of crystalline purity and brilliance, was a prototype of the real Nandin.

19. Above that there was the celestial chariot Puṣpaka decorated with sprouts. It shone with gods represented therein.

20. On the left side there were two huge saffron coloured elephants with four tusks and appearing to be of sixty years in age. They shone lustrously.

21. There were two horses too, brilliant like the sun. They were bedecked in divine ornaments and other necessary embellishments.

22. The guardians of the quarters were shown as adorned with great gems. All the gods were portrayed by Viśvakarman realistically.

23. Bhṛgu[96] and other sages, secondary gods, Siddhas and others were represented by Viśvakarman.

24. A wonderful image of Viṣṇu with his attendants

96. See Note 299 P. 397.

Garuḍa and others was created by him with wonderful features.

25. I too was portrayed as surrounded by my sons, Vedas and Siddhas. O Nārada, I was represented as reciting the hymns.

26. An artificial image of Indra seated on Airāvata and accompanied by his attendants was made by him looking as beautiful as the full moon.

27. O celestial sage, of what avail is a long-drawn description ? The gods were drawn by Viśvakarman as desired by Himavat.

28. The Altar was erected by him with wonderful features, fascinating the gods and exquisite in form.

29. On being commanded by the lord of mountains, the intelligent Viśvakarman created different abodes for the residence of the gods and others.

30. Great couches of wonderful brilliance very cosy and exquisite were made by Viśvakarman for their sake.

31. For the residence of Brahmā, seven wonderful abodes were created in a trice. They had great brilliance.

32. A brilliant abode of Viṣṇu called Vaikuṇṭha, with wonderful features, was created in a trice.

33. Viśvakarman created a wonderfully divine palace for the lord of gods endowed with all riches.

34. Wonderful mansions for the guardians of the quarters were erected by Viśvakarman. They were beautiful and large.

35. Mansions of various kinds were built by him for other gods too.

36. The highly intelligent Viśvakarman built everything very quickly for the propitiation of Śiva from whom he had secured great favours.

37. Similarly he erected Śiva's mansion of various shapes and of great brilliance. Having the symbol of Śiva it was designated as Śivaloka. It was admired by all the gods.

38. Thus for propitiating Śiva, wonderful and very brilliant structures were erected by Viśvakarman.

39. Making all arrangements in accordance with

worldly conventions, Himavat awaited eagerly for the arrival of Śiva.

40. Thus, O divine sage, I have narrated the pleasing story of Himavat entirely. What else do you wish to hear ?

CHAPTER THIRTYNINE

(The gods arrive at Kailāsa on invitation and Śiva prepares to start)

Nārada said :—

1. O dear father Brahmā, O intelligent disciple of Viṣṇu, obeisance be to you. O merciful one, this wonderful story has been heard by us from you.

2. Now I wish to hear the story of the auspicious marriage of the moon-crested lord that dispels all sins.

3. What did lord Śiva do on receiving the auspicious letter of betrothal. Please narrate that story of Śiva, the supreme soul.

Brahmā said :—

4. Dear child of great intellect, listen to the glory of Śiva, what lord Śiva did on receiving the auspicious letter.

5. On reading the auspicious letter with joy, Śiva laughed in delight. The lord honoured them duly.

6. Causing the letter to be read aloud, He duly accepted the proposal. Honouring the messengers He informed them.

7. He told the sages—"Every thing is auspicious and well done. All of you shall grace the celebration of my marriage. The marriage proposal has been accepted by me".

8. On hearing these words of Śiva, they were delighted. After bowing to and circumambulating Him they returned joyful of their great luck and grace.

9. Then Śiva, the lord of the gods, the lord indulging

in divine sports, remembered you, O sage, in accordance with worldly conventions.

10-11. You came there praising your good luck. Bowing to Him humbly with palms joined in reverence and with stooping shoulders you eulogised Him with the utterances of words "hail to Thee". O sage, you requested Him for his behest.

12. Then the delighted Śiva, heightening your pleasure with sweet speech and evincing interest in worldly conventions told you thus, O excellent sage.

Śiva said :—

13. O excellent sage, listen to us lovingly. I am speaking to you because you are the crest-jewel of my devotees.

14. At your bidding a great penance has been performed by Pārvatī. Propitiated by her I have granted her the boon of my being her husband.

15. Being subservient to her by her devotion I shall marry her. The auspicious hour free of defects has been fixed by the seven sages.

16. O Nārada, the marriage will take place after seven days from today. Following the worldly conventions I shall make a grand festival of the same.

Brahmā said :—

17. O dear one, on hearing these words of Śiva, the supreme soul, you were delighted and you spoke after bowing to the lord.

Nārada said :—

18. This is your sacred rite. You have been considered subservient to your devotees. You have carried out the desire of Pārvatī.

19. O lord, a task befitting my capacity must be mentioned by you. Considering me your own servant please be kind to me. Obeisance to you.

Brahmā said :—

20. O great sage, Śiva, favourably disposed to His

devotees, on being thus requested by you replied very delightedly to you.

Śiva said :—

21. O sage, on my behalf, invite all the gods beginning with Viṣṇu, and sages, Siddhas and others.

22. Giving due weightage to my bidding, may all of them come here enthusiastically, in all their splendour along with their women and children.

23. O sage, those who do not take part in the celebration of my marriage, are not my people, even if they are the gods.

Brahmā said :—

24. Paying heed to this behest of Śiva, O sage, you, a great favourite of Śiva, invited all of them approaching everyone severally.

25. O Nārada, after carrying out your duties as his emissary you, the great sage, returned to Śiva and remained there with His permission.

26. Śiva too waited there eagerly expecting their arrival while his attendants were celebrating great festivities by dance and songs.

27. At the same time, Viṣṇu, along with his retinue, came there suitably dressed.

28. Accompanied by his wife and followers he bowed to Śiva with great devotion and joy, and with his permission stayed there in a good abode.

29. I too accompanied by my attendants went to Kailāsa. After bowing to the lord, I too waited there with pleasure along with my followers.

30. Indra and other guardians of the quarters came there with their retinue and womenfolk richly decorated and in festive mood.

31. Similarly the sages, the Nāgas, the Siddhas, the secondary gods and others who had been duly invited came there in jovial mood.

32. Lord Śiva duly received and welcomed all those gods and others severally.

33. Then a great festival was celebrated at Kailāsa.

It was very wonderful. The celestial damsels danced in a befitting manner.

34. O sage, in the meantime Viṣṇu and other gods who had arrived there desired to make Siva's procession to start.

35. At the bidding of Śiva, all of them performed service to Śiva considering His work as their own.

36. The seven Mothers performed the rites of bedecking Śiva in a fitting manner very joyously.

37. Even the very natural dress and features of Śiva assumed the work of ornamentation, O excellent sage, at the will of lord Śiva.

38. The moon took the place of the crown. The third eye became the beautiful ornament on the forehead.

39. O sage, the serpents that had been embellishing His ears before became the ear-rings studded with various gems.

40. The serpents in the other parts became the befitting ornaments of those parts, very beautiful and studded with gems.

41. The ashes became the sweet unguent smeared over his body. The elephant hide etc. became the beautiful silken cloth.

42. The form assumed a beauty beyond description. Lord Śiva seemed to have acquired from Himself all the riches.

43. Then all the gods, demons, Nāgas, Pataṅgas, Apsarasas, sages and others approached Śiva and proclaimed jovially.

All of them said :—

44. O lord, start on journey for wedding the great goddess, the daughter of the mountain, accompanied by us. Be merciful.

45. Then the omniscient Viṣṇu of joyful mind spoke befitting the occasion after bowing to Śiva with devotion.

Viṣṇu said :—

46. O lord of the gods, favourite of those who seek

refuge in you, please carry out the task of your devotees. O lord, please listen to my submission.

47. O Śiva, let the rites of your marriage with the daughter of the lord of mountains be performed according to the laws laid down in the Gṛhya Sūtras.

48. The rites followed in your marriage, O Śiva, will become famous and be followed in the world.

49. Please cause the construction of the altar and the Nāndīmukha[97] according to family tradition. Thus you will be spreading your glory in the world, O lord.

Brahmā said :—

50. Lord Śiva thus requested by Viṣṇu, and being himself eager to follow worldly conventions performed the same duly.

51. Authorised by Him, I performed all the rites conducive to prosperity, assisted by the sages.

52-55. The sages Kaśyapa, Atri, Vasiṣṭha, Gautama, Bhāguri, Bṛhaspati, Kaṇva, Śakti,[98] Jamadagni, Parāśara, Mārkaṇḍeya, Śilāpāka, Aruṇapāla, Akṛtaśrama, Agastya, Cyavana, Garga, Śilāda, Dadhīci, Upamanyu, Bharadvāja, Akṛtavraṇa, Pippalāda, Kuśika, Kautsa, Vyāsa, with his disciples, and other sages came to Śiva. Urged by me they performed the sacred rites duly.

56. All of them who had mastered the Vedas and Vedāṅgas performed the safety rites for Śiva and tied the auspicious thread round his wrist.

57. By reciting hymns from Ṛk, Yajus, and Sāman they performed the holy rites. All the sages were greatly pleased.

58. In order to ward off obstacles they performed the adoration of the planets under my instruction. They worshipped the gods stationed in the altar.

59. After performing the social and Vedic rites in a fitting manner Śiva became pleased and bowed to the brahmins joyously.

60. Then the lord of all started from the excellent

97. Nāndīmukha is a Śrāddha ceremony performed in memory of the Manes, preliminary to any festive occasion such as marriage.

98. Śakti was the eldest son of Vasiṣṭha.

mountain Kailāsa keeping the brahmins and the gods ahead.

61. Outside the mountain Kailāsa, Śiva stopped for a while along with the gods and brahmins receiving different ovations.

62. Then a great jovial festival was celebrated by the gods and others in order to propitiate Śiva. Songs were sung. Instruments were played. Dances were held.

CHAPTER FORTY

(*The Marriage Procession of Śiva*)

Brahmā said :—

1. Then Śiva called Nandin and other Gaṇas and ordered them to accompany Him.

Śiva said :—

2. Station a few Gaṇas here and the rest of you accompany me to the city of the mountain in a jovial mood.

Brahmā said :—

3. Then the lords of Gaṇas thus ordered took their armies and started joyously. I shall explain it in general terms.

4. The lord of Gaṇas, Śaṅkhakarṇa started with a crore of Gaṇas to the city of Himavat along with Śiva.

5. Kekarākṣa took ten crores of Gaṇas with gaiety. Vikṛta, the leader of Gaṇas, took eight crores of Gaṇas.

6. Viśākha took four crores and Pārijāta took nine crores of Gaṇas.

7. The glorious Sarvāntaka and Vikṛtānana took sixty crores. Dundubha took eight crores.

8. O sage, Kapāla took five crores and the heroic Sandāraka took six crores of Gaṇas.

9. Kanduka and Kuṇḍaka took a crore of the Gaṇas. Viṣṭambha took eight crores.

10. The leader Pippala joyously went with a thousand

crores. O excellent sage, Sanādaka the hero also took so many.

11. Āveśana went with eight crores. Mahākeśa took a thousand crores.

12. O sage, Kuṇḍa and Parvataka each took twelve crores of Gaṇas with him. The heroic Candratāpana went with eight crores.

13. Kāla, Kālaka and Mahākāla each went with hundred crores of Gaṇas. The leader of Gaṇas named Agnika went with a crore.

14. Agnimukha, the leader of Gaṇas, went with a crore. Ādityamūrdhā and Ghanāvaha each went with a crore of Gaṇas.

15. Sannāha and Kumuda went with hundred crores. So also Amogha and Kokila each went with hundred crores.

16. Sumantra, the leader of Gaṇas, went with a crore of Gaṇas. Kākapādodara and Santānaka went each with six crores of Gaṇas.

17. Mahābala, Madhupiṅga and Kokila each went with nine crores. Nīla and Pūrṇabhadra each went with ninety crores of Gaṇas.

18. Caturvaktra with seven crores, Karaṇa with twenty crores and the leader of Gaṇas Ahiromaka went with ninety crores.

19. O Nārada, Yajvākṣa, Śatamanyu and Meghamanyu each of these leaders too went with so many crores.

20. Kāṣṭhāgūḍha, the leader of Gaṇas, went with sixtyfour crores. So too Virūpākṣa, Sukeśa, Vṛṣabha and Sanātana.

21. Similarly Tālaketu, Ṣaḍāsya, the eternal Cañcvāsya Saṁvartaka, Caitra and the lord Lakulīśa himself.

22-23. The brilliant Lokāntaka, Daityāntaka, lord Bhṛṅgiriṭi, the glorious Devapriya, Aśani and Bhānuka went with sixtyfour crores. Others in jovial mood went in thousands with Śiva to attend his marriage, O sage.

24. A thousand crores of Bhūtas aud three crores of Pramathas went. Vīrabhadra went with sixtyfour crores of Gaṇas and three crores of Romajas.

25. In the marriage procession of Śiva, Nandin and

other leaders of Gaṇas went surrounded by hundreds and twenties of crores of Gaṇas.

26. Knowing delightedly that it was Śiva's marriage, Bhairava the Kṣetrapāla went jovially with crores and crores of Gaṇas.

27. These and other leaders of Gaṇas of great strength and multitudinous in number joined the procession with joy and enthusiasm.

28. They had a thousand hands. They wore matted hair and crowns. They were bedecked with streaks of the moon. They had three eyes and blue necks (like lord Śiva).

29. All of them wore garlands of Rudrākṣa beads. They had the holy ashes smeared over the body. They had the ornaments of necklaces, earrings, bracelets, crowns etc.

30. The leaders were as refulgent as Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Indra, Aṇimā and other Energies.* They were as brilliant and lustrous as crores of suns.

31. O sage, some of them belonged to this terrestrial world, some came through nether worlds, some came through the sky and some came through seven heavens.

32. Of what avail is this talk ? O celestial sage, Śiva's own Gaṇas living in all the worlds came and joined the procession of Śiva, with pleasure.

33. Thus, lord Śiva, accompanied by his Gaṇas, gods and others, went to the city of Himagiri for the celebration of His marriage.

34. O great sage, listen to another incident that happened when Śiva, the lord of all, went for his marriage along with the gods and others.

35. Rudra's sister Caṇḍī assuming a great festive mood came there with great pleasure but inspiring terror in others.

36. She was riding on a ghost. She was bedecked in the ornaments of serpents. A gold pot filled (with water) shone over her head.

37. She was accompanied by her attendants. Her face was beaming. Her eyes dazzled. She was enthusiastic and glad. She was strong.

38. The divine Bhūta attendants were crores and crores in number. They shone in diverse forms.

* See Note 303 P. 235.

39. Accompanied by them Caṇḍī of deformed face went ahead gladly and enthusiastically. She was equally competent to please and to harass.

40. All the Gaṇas of Śiva numbering to eleven crores, terrible but favourites of Śiva were kept by her far behind.

41. The loud sounds of Ḍamarus, the Jhaṅkāra sound of the Bherīs and the sound of the conches pervaded all the three worlds.

42. The tumultuous sound of the Dundubhis rose up in the air blessing the universe auspiciously and destroying everything other than auspicious.

43. O sage, behind the Gaṇas, the enthusiastic gods, the Siddhas, the guardians of the quarters and others followed.

44. O sage, Viṣṇu, seated on Garuḍa and going in the middle of the group shone with the great umbrella held aloft.

45. He was surrounded by his attendants who fanned him with Cāmaras. His Pārṣadas too shone well. He was bedecked in all his ornaments.

46-47. I too shone well on the way with the Vedas, Śāstras, Purāṇas and Āgamas personified and along with my sons, Prajāpatis, Sanaka and other Siddhas. I was eager in rendering service to Śiva.

48. Going along, seated on the elephant Airāvata in the midst of his armies, Indra, the lord of god, shone well fully decorated in various ways.

49. Many other sages enthusiastic about the marriage of Śiva shone well on their way.

50-51. Śākinīs, Yātudhānas Vetālas, Brahmarākṣasas, Bhūtas, Pretas and Pramathas, Tumburu, Nārada, Hāhā, Hūhū,[99] Gandharvas and Kinnaras went ahead playing on their musical instruments with great delight.

52-53. The Mothers of the universe, the celestial-virgins, Gāyatrī, Sāvitrī, Lakṣmī, the celestial maidens, the wives of the gods, the mothers of the worlds went ahead with great joy, only because it was the marriage of Śiva.

54-55. Lord Śiva, favourably disposed to virtue, was

99. Tumbaru, Hāhā and Hūhū were the Gandharvas, attending on Kubera. They were expert musicians who played on Vīṇā and other musical instruments and were generally invited at festivities

seated on his bull of crystal purity and beauty—the bull who is called Dharma by the Vedas, Śāstras, Siddhas and sages. Śiva was being served by the gods and sages on his way. He shone well.

56. Accompanied by all these sages and decorated in various ways, lord Śiva was going to the abode of the mountain Himālaya for the marriage with Pārvatī. He shone well.

57. Thus the story of Śiva's grand procession has been narrated to you. O Nārada, listen to the incidents of good portent that happened in the city of Himavat.

CHAPTER FORTYONE

(*Description of the Altar-Structure*)

Brahmā said :—

1. Then after mutual consultation and getting Śiva's permission, O sage, Viṣṇu sent you ahead to the abode of the mountain.

2. Urged by Viṣṇu, O Nārada, you bowed to lord Śiva and went ahead of all to the abode of Himavat.

3. O sage, after going there, you saw your own image made by Viśvakarman and were surprised. You were a bit ashamed too.

4. O great sage, tired of seeing the portrayal of yourself, you became engaged in seeing the other builds of Viśvakarman.

5. You entered the great altar of Himavat, studded with various gems and decorated with gold pots and stumps of plantain trees.

6. It had a thousand columns. It was wonderful. O sage, you were struck with surprise on seeing the altars.

7. Then you were a bit confused and greatly bewildered. You spoke to the lord of mountains thus.

8-9. O lord of mountains, tell me the truth. Has lord Śiva seated on his bull and surrounded by his Gaṇas come already for the marriage ? Have the gods with Viṣṇu

and others at their head, the sages, the Siddhas and the secondary gods come already ?"

Brahmā said :—

10. On hearing your words full of surprise, O sage, the mountain Himavat told you the truth.

Himavat said :—

11. O Nārada, O highly intelligent one, Śiva with the marriage party has not come till now for the purpose of marrying Pārvatī.

12. O Nārada, know that all these things have been portrayed by Viśvakarman. O celestial sage, shake off your bewilderment. Be calm. Remember Śiva.

13. Showing kindness to me you take your food and rest for a while. Then gladly accompany Maināka and others to Śiva's presence.

14. Accompanied by these mountains you request Śiva along with the gods, and the great sages, Śiva whose sprout-like feet are worshipped by gods and demons. Bring them here.

Brahmā said:—

15. You accepted the suggestion noble-heartedly and performed the duties there. Then accompanied by the sons of the mountain and others you went to Śiva's presence.

16. There the brilliant god Śiva surrounded by the gods and others was seen and bowed to by you and the mountains with devotion.

17. Then all the gods including Indra, Viṣṇu and me and Śiva's attendants asked you, O sage.

18. They had been struck with surprise and suspicion on seeing the mountains Maināka, Sahya, Meru and others bedecked in all kinds of ornaments.

The gods said:—

19. O Nārada, intelligent one, you appear to be bewildered. Have you been duly honoured by Himavat or not ? Tell us in detail.

20. Why have these excellent mountains Maināka,

Sahya, Meru and others highly bedecked and of great valour, come here ?

21. O Nārada, does the mountain really intend to give his daugther to Śiva or not ? What is it that is taking place in the abode of Himavat now ? Please tell us.

22. We are having doubts in our minds. Hence we, the heaven-dwellers, ask you. Please say everything, O righteous one, and dispel our suspicions.

Brahmā said :—

23, On hearing these words of Viṣṇu and other heaven-dwellers, O sage, you who had been fascinated by the magic of Tvaṣṭṛ (Viśvakarman) spoke to them.

24. Going to an isolated place, O sage, you spoke these words to me, to Viṣṇu and also to Indra who is the lord of gods and a former enemy of the mountains, having cut off their wings.[100]

Nārada said :—

25. The distorted portayal of heaven-dwellers is something enchanting. He desires to delude the gods in a loving but cunning manner.

26. O lord of Śacī, have you forgotten everything ? Formerly you had deluded him. Hence he wishes to surpass you here in the abode of the mountain of noble heart.

27. I have been fascinated by my shining portrait. Viṣṇu, Brahmā and Indra have been realistically portrayed by him.

28. O lord of gods, why should I talk too much ? He has made artificial prototypes of all the gods. No one, not a single detail, has been left out.

29. It is for the purpose of particularly enchanting the gods that this spell has been employed by him through this caricature.

Brahmā said :—

30. On hearing your words lord Indra who was frigh-

100. Indra is said to have clipped the wings of the mountains when they grew troublesome.

tened from head to foot, immediately spoke to Viṣṇu.

Lord Indra said :—

31. O lord of Lakṣmī, O lord of gods, Tvaṣṭṛ who is agitated due to the grief over his son will surely kill me under this pretext and not otherwise.

Brahmā said:—

32. On hearing his words Viṣṇu, the lord of gods laughingly consoled Indra by speaking thus.

Viṣṇu said :—

33. O lord of Śacī, formerly you had been enchanted by the demons Nivātakavacas, your previous enemies, by the power of their great spell.

34. O Indra, at my instance, this mountain Himavat and others too were rendered wingless.

35. Let the mountains now create magic on remembering that and wish to surpass us foolishly. We are not to be afraid of our enemies.

36. O Indra, Śiva favourably disposed to His devotees, will undoubtedly look to our welfare.

37. While he was speaking this to Indra of agitated mind, Śiva spoke to Viṣṇu following the worldly custom.

Śiva said : —

38. "O Viṣṇu, O lord of gods, what are you speaking to each other?" O sage, after speaking thus to them Śiva addressed you.

39. "O Nārada, what does the great mountain say? Tell me the truth with details. You must not keep any secret.

40. Does the mountain want to give the daughter or not? Tell me that quickly. O dear one, on going there, what did you see? What did you do? Tell me that quickly.

Brahmā said :—

41. Addressed thus by Śiva, O sage, you endowed with divine vision told him secretly what you saw in the altar.

Nārada said :—

42. O great lord, lord of gods, listen to my auspicious words. O lord, there is no fear of any hindrance in the celebration of marriage.

43. The lord of mountains will surely give his daughter to you. It is certainly to take you there that these mountains have come here.

44. But to delude the gods a wonderful spell has been created. O omniscient, it is only to inspire curiosity. There is no possibility of any obstacle.

45. O lord, Viśvakarman, a great expert in creating illusion has constructed a peculiar altar in his house at his instance. It is full of surprising things.

46. A fascinating assembly of gods has been built there. On seeing it I was deluded by his skill and was struck with surprise.

Brahmā said :—

47. O dear, on hearing your words, the lord Śiva following the worldly convention, laughingly spoke to Viṣṇu and other gods.

Śiva said :—

48. O Viṣṇu, if the mountain Himavat gives his daughter to me, what have I to do with this spell? Speak to me what is true.

49. O Brahmā, O Indra, O sages, O gods, speak truly. What have I to do with the spell if the mountain gives his daughter ?

50. It is held by scholars, knowing cogent reasons, that somehow or other the fruit should be achieved. Hence you, with Viṣṇu at the head, will hasten seeking only the task on hand.

Brahmā said :—

51. Discussing thus with gods, Śiva appeared to be completely overpowered by Kāma like an ordinary man.

52-54. At the bidding of Śiva, Viṣṇu and other gods, the noble sages and others, O sage, kept you and mountains at the head and started for the abode of Himavat. They

were surprised to see the wonderful abode. The delighted Śiva reached the outskirts of the city accompanied by Viṣṇu and others as well as his delighted Gaṇas.

CHAPTER FORTYTWO

(Description of the meeting of the lord and the mountain)

Brahmā said :—

1. On hearing that the all-pervading Śiva had come very near his city, the lord of mountains Himavat rejoiced much.

2. Then, gathering all the requisite things he sent mountains and the brahmins to welcome Śiva.

3. With his mind melting with devotion and joyously praising his luck, the mountain personally went to see Śiva as dear as the very vital air.

4. On seeing the army of the gods Himavat was struck with wonder. Considering himself blessed he appeared in front of them.

5. The gods too were struck with wonder on seeing his army. The gods and the mountains became delighted.

6. The vast army of the mountains and the gods, O sage, on coming together shone like the eastern and western oceans in juxtaposition.

7. Meeting each other, the gods and the mountains considered themselves blessed. They were greatly delighted.

8. Seeing Śiva in front, Himavat bowed to Him. The mountains and the brahmins bowed to Sadāśiva.

9-14. He was seated on his bull, fully bedecked in ornaments and beaming in the face. The beauty of his divine person illuminated the quarters. His body shone in the delicate silken garments. His crown was lustrous with the gems set in it. He was smiling shedding pure brilliance everywhere. Serpents had transformed themselves into ornaments on his body. He had a wonderful lustre and a divine refulgence. Gods served him with chowries in their

hands. Viṣṇu was standing to the left, Brahmā to the right, Indra at his back. Behind on either side, the gods were standing. He was being eulogised by the gods and others. He looked benevolent to the people. Being one He had assumed different physical bodies for his own reasons. He was Brahman itself, the lord of all and the bestower of boons. He was both with or without attributes, subservient to the devotees, merciful, greater than primordial Being and primordial nature, Existence, Knowledge and Bliss itself.

15. The mountain saw Viṣṇu, bedecked in ornaments and seated on Garuḍa to the right of lord Śiva.

16. O sage, to the left of the lord stood I, the four-faced deity, shining brilliantly and accompanied by my attendants.

17. On seeing us both, great favourites of Śiva for ever, the lord of mountains with all his retinue respectfully bowed to us.

18. Similarly, on seeing the gods and others brilliantly shining behind lord Śiva and at his sides, the lord of mountains bowed to them.

19. At the bidding of Śiva the mountain went ahead to his city. Behind him went Viṣṇu, Brahmā, the sages and the gods.

20. O Nārada, the sages, the gods and others accompanying the lord, praised the city of Himavat with great delight.

21. Stationing the gods and others on his beautiful summit specially arranged for them, Himavat went to the place where the altar for the rites had been erected.

22. After causing squares and quadrangles to be made with festoons, he performed the ceremonial ablutions, gave charitable gifts and supervised everything.

23. Then he sent his sons to Śiva accompanied by all his attendants and followers, Viṣṇu and others.

24. The extremely delighted lord of mountains in the company of his kinsmen desired to perform the reception to the bridegroom with great pomp and ceremony.

25. The sons of the mountain accompanied by their relatives went to Śiva and acquainted him with the request of the mountain.

26. The sons of the mountain came back to their abode with his permission and informed the king of mountains gladly that the bridegroom and the party were on their way there.

27. O sage, on hearing the request thus made, Viṣṇu and other gods with the lord rejoiced much.

28. Dressed richly and exquisitely the gods, the gaṇas, the sages and others started towards the abode of lord Himavat.

29. In the meantime, Menā desired to see Śiva. O sage, through her lord, you, the excellent sage, were requisitioned there.

30. O sage, urged by the lord who desired to fulfil the task of Śiva you went there.

31. O sage, after bowing to you, Menā with her heart full of surprise told you that she wanted to see the real form of lord Śiva that dispels haughtiness.

CHAPTER FORTYTHREE

(*Description of Śiva's wonderful sport*)

Menā said :—

1. O sage, I shall first see the bridegroom of Pārvatī. Let me have an idea of the form and features of Śiva for which she performed the great penance.

Brahmā said :—

2. Thus, urged by ignorance, O sage, she went to the terrace along with you to see Śiva.

3. Then Śiva, realising her false pride in herself, spoke to Viṣṇu and me as a part of His wonderful sport.

Śiva said :—

4. "At my bidding, O dear ones, both of you go one by one accompanied by the gods to the threshold of the mountain. I shall follow afterwards."

Brahmā said :—

5. On hearing it Viṣṇu called all and told them of his suggestion. The gods then walked in accordance with that suggestion enthusiastically.

6. O sage, the lord of the universe, let Menā stand on the terrace and see the procession along with you in order to make her mind confused.

7. In the meantime, seeing the splendid vast army, O sage, Menā became delighted as usual.

8. At the head of procession came the beautiful fastidious Gandharvas, dressed in rich clothes and bedecked in fine ornaments.

9. They rode on different vehicles. They played on musical instruments. Flags and banners of various colours and sizes fluttered on their chariots. The heavenly nymphs accompanied them.

10. On seeing Vasu,[101] the lord of Vasus, along with Vasus, Menā became delighted and exclaimed—"O this is Śiva".

11. O excellent sage, you told her "These are only the attendants of Śiva. This is not Śiva, the bridegroom."

12. On hearing this, Menā fell athinking "A person greater than this ! Hā, how will he be !"

13. In the meantime she saw Maṇigrīva,[102] the other Yakṣas and their vast army with twice the splendour of Vasus.

14. On seeing the lustrous Maṇigrīva the lord of Yakṣas, Menā was delighted and said—"This is Śiva, the bridegroom of Pārvatī."

15. "This is not Śiva, the bridegroom of Pārvatī. He is only an attendant of Śiva" said you to Menā, the wife of the mountain. By that time the god of fire passed by.

16. On seeing his splendour twice that of Yakṣas, she

101. Vasu is the chief of the eight Vasus who in fact are personifications of natural phenomena, viz. water, pole-star, moon, earth, wind, fire, dawn and light. Cf. Note 163, P. 162.

102. Maṇigrīva is one of the sons of Kubera, distinct from Maṇibhadra who is also a Yakṣa.

said "This is Śiva, the bridegroom of Pārvatī" but you said "No".

17. By that time Yama passed by with twice the splendour of the previous one. On seeing him delighted Menā exclaimed "This is Śiva".

18. "No" said you. By that time Nirṛti, the lord of Puṇyajanas, passed by having twice the splendour of Yama.

19. On seeing him the delighted Menā said "This is Śiva". "No" said you to her. By that time Varuṇa passed that way.

20. On seeing his splendour twice that of Nirṛti, she said "This is Śiva, the bridegroom of Pārvatī". But you said "No".

21. By that time Vāyu passed by with twice the splendour of Varuṇa. On seeing him the delighted Menā said "This is Śiva".

22. "No" said you. By that time Kubera, the lord of Guhyakas, passed by with twice the splendour of Vāyu.

23. On seeing him the delighted Menā said "This is Śiva". "No", said you to her. By that time Īśāna passed by.

24. On seeing his splendour twice that of Kubera, she said "This is Rudra, the bridegroom of Pārvatī". But you said "No".

25. Then came Indra, the most important of all the gods, the lord of the three worlds, endowed with divine refulgence and who had twice the splendour of Īśāna.

26. On seeing him Menakā said—"This is Śiva". "Not he", said you then "This is Indra, the lord of gods".

27. By that time the moon passed by with twice the splendour of Indra. On seeing him she said "This is Śiva" and you denied it.

28. By that time the Sun passed by with twice the splendour of the moon. On seeing him she said "It is he". You said to her "No".

29. By that time Bhṛgu and other sages, all highly lustrous and accompanied by their disciples, passed by.

30. On seeing Bṛhaspati in their midst Menakā

said :—"This is Śiva the master of Pārvatī". Then you said "No".

31. By that time Brahmā passed by. He was in an excellent from of lustre, praised by excellent sages and looking like an embodied Dharma itself.

32. O sage, seeing me the highly delighted Menā said—"This is Pārvatī's husband". You said to her "No".

33-35. In the meantime lord Viṣṇu came that way. He looked glorious and splendid, dark-blue like the fresh cloud and having four arms. He had the handsome features of numberless cupids. He wore yellow garments. He was the king of heaven with eyes resembling the petals of a lotus, and looked very calm. He had Garuḍa as his vehicle. He possessed all the characteristic signs conch etc. He was bedecked in crown and other ornaments. He wore Śrīvatsa on his chest. He had an uncommon splendour that was incomprehensible

36. On seeing him Menā's eyes became dazed. With great delight she said—"This is Śiva himself the bridegroom of Pārvatī. There is no doubt about it".

37-39. On hearing Menakā's words you said—" No, this is not the lord, the cause of protection and enjoyment. This is not the bridegroom of Pārvatī. This is Viṣṇu, the officer-in-charge of the marriage-party of Śiva and a great favourite of Śiva. The bridegroom Śiva is better than him. O Menā, it is impossible for me to describe his beauty. He is the lord of the entire universe, the lord of all, the Self-Emperor".

Brahmā said :—

40. On hearing your words, Menā thought her daughter auspicious, rich, fortunate and harbinger of happiness for the three families.

41. Her face was beaming with pleasure and her heart was delighted. Frequently congratulating herself on her good luck she said :—

Menā said :—

42. By the birth of Pārvatī, I have become blessed in

every respect. The lord of mountains too is blessed. Every thing connected with me is blessed.

43. Her would-be-husband is the lord of these leaders of great lustre whom I have seen now.

44. How can I describe her good luck even in hundred years ? It is impossible to describe it when I see the lustre of these leaders.

Brahmā said :—

45. Thus spoke Menā with her mind full of love and hope. By that time Śiva, the wonderful source of enjoyment and protection, came that way.

46. He showed himself in his real form free from change of illusion. O dear, the Gaṇas of wonderful forms proved to be the dispeller of Menā's pride.

47. O sage Nārada, on seeing Him come, you lovingly pointed him out to her as the bridegroom of Śivā and spoke to her.

Nārada said :—

48. This is Śiva Himself, O comely maiden, see. It was for him that Pārvatī performed a great penance in the forest.

Brahmā said :—

49. Thus addressed by you the delighted Menā stared at the lord with joy; the lord Īśāna of wonderful features and of wonderful attendants.

50. Immediately the army of Śiva came there consisting of wonderful arrays of Bhūtas, Pretas and Gaṇas.

51. Some were in the form of violent gusts of wind, producing hissing sounds with waving flags. Some had crooked faces. Others were deformed.

52. Some were awful with overgrown moustaches and beards. Some were lame. Some were blind. Some held staffs and nooses and some great iron clubs in their hands.

53. Some rode on peculiar vehicles. Some played on

horns. Some played on Ḍamarus. Some played on Gomukhas.

54. Some had no faces. Some had distorted and deformed faces. Some had many faces. Some had no hands. Others had deformed hands. Some of them had many hands.

55. Some had no eyes. Some had many eyes. Some had no head. Some had deformed heads. Some had no ears. Some had many ears. The Gaṇas had all types of dresses and features.

56. Such and other innumerable deformed Gaṇas, heroic and terrible, strong and strenuous passed by, O dear.

57. O sage, you pointed out the Gaṇas of Śiva to her with your finger and said—"O lovely lady, see the attendants of Śiva and Śiva Himself."

58. O sage, on seeing the innumerable Gaṇas, Bhūtas and Pretas, Menakā was terribly frightened instantaneously.

59-61. On seeing Śiva in their midst, the mother of Pārvatī trembled. She saw Śiva who though devoid of attributes was better than those who had all the attributes, He was seated on the Bull. He had five faces[103] and three eyes. He had ashes smeared over the body. He had matted hair with the crescent moon on His head. He had ten hands with the skull in one of them. His upper cloth was tiger's hide. He held the bow Pināka in one of his hands and the Trident in another. He had odd eyes, ugly features utterly dishevelled and untidy. He wore the hide of an elephant.

62. She was stunned, tremulous agitated and confused. You said to her "This is Śiva" and pointed Him out to her.

63. On hearing your words she fell on the ground like a tender creeper blown by the wind. Menā the chaste lady was grief-stricken.

64. "What is this ? I have been deceived for being too ambitious. Of what use is it to see this deformity ?" Saying this, Menakā fell unconscious there in a trice.

65. Her maids exerted themselves in various ways and attended on her. Then gradually she, the beloved of the lord of mountains, regained consciousness.

103. On the five-faced form of lord Śiva see Note 25 P. 34.

CHAPTER FORTYFOUR

(*Menā regains consciousness*)

Brahmā said:—

1-2. On regaining consciousness, the chaste beloved of the mountain lamented with great agitation and began to rebuke everyone. In faltering words she frequently censured her sons at first and then scolded her daughter.

Menā said :—

3. O sage, formerly it was mentioned be you that Pārvatī would marry Śiva. Afterwards you assigned some activity of worship to Himavat.

4. Its fruit is visible now, to be sure. But it is adverse and meaningless. O sage, O wicked minded one, I the innocent woman have been cheated by you by all means.

5. The fruit of penance which she performed and which is very difficult even for the sages to perform, has been this, painful to every onlooker.

6. What shall I do? Where shall I go? Who will dispel my sorrow ? My family is wrecked. My life is doomed.

7. Where are those so called celestial sages? I shall pluck out their beards. Where is that mischievous woman who came here by herself in the guise of the wife of one of them ?

8. By whose guilt have I been ruined now ?" Saying this she turned to her daughter and began to say harsh words.

9. O wretched daughter, what is it that you have done ? This is extremely painful to me. You have given gold and brought a glass piece, O wicked girl.

10. You have cast away sandal paste and smeared yourself with mud. You have driven away the swan and have held a crow in your hands.

11. Setting aside the sacred river water you have drunk the well-water. Losing the sun you have clung to the glowworm in all earnestness.

12. Throwing away cooked rice you have eaten the

husk. Spilling away the clarified butter you have eagerly swallowed castor oil.

13. Setting the lion aside a jackal has been served by you. Without listening to the lore of Supreme Brahman[104] you have heard base ballads.

14. O daughter, casting off the holy sacrificial ashes at home you have taken the inauspicious ashes from the funeral pyre.

15. Abandoning the great lords, Viṣṇu and others you have performed penance for Śiva. Your intellect has really gone astray.

16. Fie on you. Fie on your intellect. Fie on your beauty and conduct. Fie on your adviser. Fie on your maids too.

17. Fie on us who brought you thus to the world, O daughter. O Nārada, fie on your intelligence and fie on those seven sages who gave us wrong advice.

18. Fie on the whole family. Fie on the efficiency in performing the rites. Fie on everything done by you. You have inflamed this household. Almost it has been a death blow to me.

19. Let not the king of the mountains come near me. Let not the seven sages show their faces to me.

20. Has anything been achieved ? Our whole race is wrecked by all conspiring together. How is it that I have not remained a barren woman ? How is it that a miscarriage did not take place when I conceived ?

21. How is it that I did not die ? How is it that this girl did not die ? Why is she not devoured by the demons and others from the sky ?

22. I shall cut off your head. What shall I do with the bodies ? Abandoning you where shall I go ? Alas, my whole life is doomed.

Brahmā said :—

23. After saying this Menā fell unconscious on the

104. It refers to the spiritual knowledge as revealed in the Upaniṣads and other treatises, e.g. the identity of the individual soul with the universal soul, the reality of the spirit over the unreality of the matter and so on.

ground. Agitated by grief and anger she did not go near her husband.

24. There was a great hue and cry at that time, O great sage. The gods came near her.

25. O celestial sage, I too came myself. On seeing me, O excellent sage, you spoke to her.

Nārada said :—

26. The real handsome form of Śiva is not known by you. This form is assumed by Śiva in a sportive mood. It is not the real form.

27. Hence, O chaste lady, cast off anger. Be calm. Leave off your obduracy. Do what is proper to be done. Give Pārvatī to Śiva.

Brahmā said :—

28. On hearing your words, Menā spoke to you—"O wicked one, get up and go away. You are base".

29. When she said thus, Indra and all other gods and the guardians of the quarters came and spoke.

The gods said :—

30. O Menā, O daughter of the Pitṛs, listen to our words joyously. This Śiva is the Supreme lord Himself, the bestower of the greatest happiness.

31. He is favourably disposed to good devotees. On seeing your daughter's severe penance He had appeared before her and granted her the boon.

Brahmā said :—

32. Menā cried aloud frequently and spoke to the gods—"My daughter will not be given to Śiva of fierce features.

33. Why have you all conspired together to render her beauty futile ?"

34. O excellent sages, when she uttered thus, the seven sages, Vasiṣṭha and others, came there and spoke :—

The seven sages said :—

35. "O daughter of the Pitṛs, O beloved of the

mountain, we have come here to achieve a purpose. In this important affair how can we entertain opposite views?

36. The very vision of Śiva is the greatest gain. He has come to your palace as the suppliant for your gift".

Brahmā said :—

37. Though advised by them, Menā did not accept their proposal. Weak in knowledge she spoke to the sages in anger.

Menā said :—

38. I would rather slay her with weapons than give her to Śiva. All of you go away. You shall never come near me.

Brahmā said :—

39. O sage, on saying thus she stopped. She cried aloud in great excitement. A great hue and cry ensued due to her intercession.

40. Then Himācala himself came there extremely agitated. In order to convince her he spoke lovingly pointing to her the reality of the situation.

Himācala said :—

41. O beloved Menā, listen to my words. How is it that you have become dispirited? How many important persons have come to our abode! And you are insulting them!

42. You do not know Śiva. Śiva has many names and many forms. Seeing a peculiar distorted form you have become excited.

43. He has been realised by me. He is the protector of everyone. He is worthy of worship of the most adorable. He can bless and countermand.

44. Do not be obstinate. O faultless beloved, do not be grief-stricken. Get up. Hasten. O virtuous one, carry on your duties.

45. Let me remind you of a former incident when Śiva came to our place in a hideous form and exhibited his sports.

46. But on seeing his greatness we both consented to give our daughter in marriage to him. O beloved, keep that promise.

Brahmā said:—

47. After saying thus, the lord of the mountains stopped, O sage. On hearing it Menā, the mother of Śivā, spoke to Himavat.

Menā said:—

48-50. "O lord, let my words be heard. You can carry out what I say. Take your daughter Pārvatī, tie her up and cast her down into a deep abysmal chasm. Or drown her in the deep sea and be happy. I am not going to give her to Śiva. If you give your daughter to him who is of hideous features, O lord, I shall certainly leave off this mortal frame.

Brahmā said:—

51. When these words were spoken by Menā in her obduracy, Pārvatī voluntarily spoke in a sweet voice.

Pārvatī said:—

52. "O mother, your noble intellect has become perverted. Why do you foresake virtue, you who ought to depend on virtue alone ?

53. This Śiva has no one else greater than him. He is Śiva. the source of everything. He is beautiful, pleasing and eulogised in all the Vedas.

54. Śiva is the benefactor. He is the lord of gods. He is self-ruler. O mother, He is of many forms and names. He is served by Viṣṇu, Brahmā and others.

55. He is the support of everything. He is the creator and annihilator. He is free from aberrations. He is the lord of the three deities. He is indestructible and eternal.

56. It is for him that all the gods, as attendants, have come here. They stand in a festive mood at your threshold. What more pleasure dò you need ?

57. Hence get up. Endeavour to make your life fruitful. Give me to Śiva. Make my effort meaningful.

58. O mother, give me to lord Śiva. O mother, agree to my humble entreaty. I request you.

59. If you do not give me to Śiva, I am not going to woo anyone else. How can a jackal, the cunning cheat, seize the share of the lion ?

60. O mother, Śiva has been wooed, yes, wooed by me mentally, verbally, and physically. You can do what you please.

Brahmā said:—

61-62. On hearing these words of Pārvatī, Menā, the beloved of the lord of mountains lamented much. She became angry. She caught hold of Pārvatī and thrashed her with fists, elbows gnashing her teeth. She was greatly agitated and furious.

63. O dear one, O sage, you and other sages who were there, separated her from the mother and took her far off.

64. Menā then rebuked them again and again. She hurled harsh repulsive words at all of them.

Menā said:—

65. See what I will do to Pārvatī of evil inclination. I will give her deadly poison or I will push her down in a deep well.

66. Or I will cut her into many pieces with weapons and arrows. Or I will drown my daughter Pārvatī in the deep sea.

67. Or I will certainly cast off my body. But I will never give my daughter to Śiva of hideous form.

68. What an awful bridegroom has been secured by this wicked girl ? The mountain and I, nay the whole family, has been made a laughing stock.

69. He has neither a mother nor a father. He has no brother no kinsman. He has not even a fellow clansman. He has no beauty, no skill, not even a house of His own!

70. He has no good dress, no ornaments, no assistants His vehicle is not good. He is neither rich nor even in the prime of youth.

71. He has no tidiness about him. He is not learned.

What a repulsive body he has ! What has he, on seeing which I may be tempted to give my good daughter to him ?"

Brahmā said:—

72. O sage she lamented thus and in many a similar manner she cried in the excess of her grief.

73. Then I came there quickly and narrated to her the principles of Śiva which ought to have dispelled her perverted knowledge.

74. "O Menā, you shall listen lovingly to my auspicious words whereby your evil inclination shall cease.

75. Śiva is the creator, sustainer and annihilator of the universe. You do not know His real form. Wherefore do you then seek sorrow ?

76. The lord has several forms and names. He indulges in many kinds of divine sports. He is the lord of all and independent. He is the master of delusion and free from doubtful alternatives.

77. Realising this, O Menā, give your daughter to Śiva. Abandon your misplaced stubbornness. Your evil inclination is destructive of all affairs".

78. Thus addressed by me Menā continued to cry again and again. Slowly, O sage, she eschewed all shame and spoke to me.

Menā said:—

79. O Brahmā, why do you render her excellent beauty futile ? Why don't you kill her yourself ?

80. You shall not tell me again that she should be given to Śiva. I will not give my daughter, dearer than my own life, to Śiva.

Brahmā said:—

81. O great sage, when she expressed thus, Sanaka and other Siddhas came there and spoke lovingly.

Siddhas said:—

82. This Śiva is the supreme being, the bestower of

supreme happiness. Out of His sympathy He has granted His vision to your daughter.

Brahmā said:—

83. Then Menā said to them after sobbing frequently—"My riches are not to be given to Śiva of hideous form.

84 Why are you Siddhas collectively attempting to make her exquisite beauty futile ?"

85. When this was mentioned by her I became stunned. All the gods, Siddhas, sages and human beings were bewildered.

86. In the meantime, on hearing of her persistent obduracy, Viṣṇu a favourite of Śiva came there and spoke as follows.

Viṣṇu said:—

87-88. You are the beloved mental daughter of the Pitṛs. You are endowed with all good qnalities. You are wife of Himavat himself. Yours is the excellent race of Brahmā. Your well-wishers in the world are also like him (Brahmā). You are really blessed. What more can I say? You are reputed to be a patron of virtue. Why do you then eschew virtue ?

89. May this be pondered over by you yourself. Can anything against you be mentioned by the gods, sages, or Brahmā or by myself ?

90. You do not know Śiva. He is both possessed and devoid of attributes. He is hideous as well as comely. He is worthy of worship by all. He is the ultimate goal of the good.

91. The primordial nature is created by Him alone. Near her, the excellent primordial Being has also been created by Him.

92. Brahmā and I are created thereafter. Then, with the three attributes, Śiva Himself, incarnated in order to be beneficial to the worlds.

93. The Vedas originated from Him. The gods sprang up from Him. Whatever mobile and immobile there is in the universe, sprang up from him.

94. Whŏ has described His form? By whom can it be

known ? Even Brahmā and I were not able to gauge him.

95. Whatever is seen in the universe from Brahmā down to a blade of grass is identical with Śiva. Know it. There need not be any hesitation in this matter.

96. He alone, in the course of his divine sport, has incarnated himself in divine form. It was by the fascination of Pārvatī's penance that He has come to your threshold.

97. Hence, O wife of Himavat, eschew your sorrow. Worship Śiva. You will have great pleasure. All pain will be quelled.

Brahmā said:—

98. O sage, when instructed by Viṣṇu, Menakā's mind was somewhat softened.

99. But she did not give up her obduracy She did not consent to the proposal of giving her daughter to Śiva. Menā was deluded by Śiva's magic.

100. On hearing the pleasing words of Viṣṇu, the beloved of the mountain, the mother of Pārvatī became slightly enlightened and spoke to Viṣṇu.

101. If He assumes a lovely form and body my daughter may be given to Him and not otherwise even if you attempt it a thousand times. This is my firm decision.

102. After saying thus Menā of steady resolve kept quiet. She was induced by Śiva's will whose magical power deludes all.

CHAPTER FORTYFIVE

(Śiva's comely form and the Jubilation of the Citizens

Brahmā said :—

1. In the meantime, O sage. urged by Viṣṇu you went immediately to Śiva to conciliate Him.

2. After reaching there, with a desire to get the task of the gods fulfilled, you pleaded with Śiva after eulogising Him with different kinds of hymns.

3. On hearing your words Śiva joyously assumed a wonderfully excellent and divine form and showed His mercifulness.

4. O sage, on seeing the comely form of Śiva, the receptacle of exquisite beauty, far better than that of the cupid, you were greatly delighted.

5. Highly delighted you eulogised Him again and again with different kinds of hymns and returned to the place where Menā was seated along with other gods.

6. Reaching there, O sage, with great affection and delight, you spoke to the great pleasure of Menā, the wife of Himavat.

Nārada said :—

7. O Menā of wide eyes, see the excellent features of Śiva. The merciful Śiva has taken great pity on us.

Brahmā said :—

8. Extremely surprised on hearing your words, Menā the beloved wife of the mountain, saw Śiva's form that afforded great bliss.

9-12. It was as refulgent as that of a thousand suns. Every part of the body was exquisite. The garments were of variegated colours. He was embellished with different ornaments. He was smiling with great delight. His comeliness was highly pleasing. He was fair-complexioned and lustrous. The crescent moon added to his beauty. Viṣṇu and other gods lovingly served Him. The sun acted as His royal umbrella. The moon embellished Him. In every way He was extremely handsome bedecked in ornaments. It was impossible to describe adequately the great beauty of His vehicle.

13. The Gaṅgā and the Yamunā were waving the Chowries. The eight Siddhis[105] danced in front of Him.

14. Viṣṇu, I, Indra and the other gods bedecked their bodies and dress and accompanied Śiva.

15. The Gaṇas of various forms and features shouted

105. The eightfold Siddhis are personified here. For details see Note 203 P. 235

cries of "Victory" "Victory" and walked in front of Śiva.

16. The Siddhas, the secondary gods, the extremely delighted sages went in company of Śiva. The others too were equally delighted.

17. Thus the fully decorated gods, were very jubilant and in the company of their wives they eulogised Śiva, the Supreme Brahman.

18. Viśvāvasu[106] and others along with the celestial damsels sang songs of Śiva's glory.

19. O excellent sage, when Śiva was nearing the threshold of the palace of Himavat, there was much jubilation there.

20. O excellent sage, who can describe the exquisite splendour of the supreme lord at that time.

21. On seeing Him in that form Menā stood stunned as though drawn in a picture for a moment, O sage, and spoke these words.

Menā said :—

22. O great lord, my daughter is indeed blessed, she by whom the great penance was performed. It is by virtue of that penance that you have come to my threshold.

23. O lord of Pārvatī, be pleased now. Pardon me for the heap of repulsive words I showered on Śiva.

Brahmā said :—

24. After saying thus and eulogising the moon-crested lord, Menā, the beloved of the mountain, bowed to Him with palms joined in reverence and stood shy.

25. By that time the ladies of the town left the work they were engaged in, in their eagerness to see Śiva.

26. A certain lady in the midst of her bath and toilet was overwhelmed with the desire to see Śiva, the bridegroom of Pārvatī. She came out with the shampoo powder still held in her hands.

106. Viśvāvasu is the chief of the Gandharvas in Indra's heaven. He is a famous musician and is said to possess all girls from the advent of their youth and transfer them to Agni from whom the bridegrooms obtain them for producing wealth and sons.

27. A certain lady engaged in fanning her husband in the company of her maid left that job and came out to see Śiva with the fan still in her hands.

28. Another lady engaged in suckling her babe at her breast left him dissatisfied and came out eagerly to see the lord.

29. Another lady engaged in trying her waist girdle came out with it. Another lady came out with garments worn inside out

30. Another lady left her husband who had sat down to dine and came out athirsting and enthusiastic to see the bridegroom

31. A certain lady holding the collyrium in her hand after applying it to one of her eyes came out to see the bridegroom of the daughter of the mountain with the salve stick still in her hand.

32. Another damsel engaged in applying the red lac juice to her feet heard the tumult outside and so left it in the middle and came out to see the procession.

33. Thus the ladies forsook their activities, left their houses and came out. On seeing the exquisite form of Śiva they were greatly fascinated.

34. Delighted on seeing Śiva and overwhelmed by affection they cherished the comely form in their hearts and spoke as follows :—

The ladies said:—

35. The eyes of the residents of this town have become fruitful. The life of the persons who have seen this comely form has become meaningful.

36. The life is fruitful and the rites are fruitful only of the person who has seen Śiva, the destroyer of all sins.

37. Pārvatī has accomplished everything in asmuch as she performed penance for Śiva. She is blessed, she is contented in securing Śiva as her husband.

38. If Brahmā had not joined this pair, Śiva and Śivā, his endeavour of creation would have entirely become fruitless.

39. This is well done. The excellent pair has been united. Everything has become meaningful in every activity.

40. A vision of Śiva is inaccessible to men without

penance. All of us have now become contented by seeing Śiva.

41. Just as Lakṣmī was blessed by securing Viṣṇu as her lord, formerly, so also the gentle lady Pārvatī has become embellished on securing Śiva.

42. Just as Sarasvatī was blessed by securing Brahmā as her husband, so also the gentle lady Pārvatī has become embellished on getting Śiva as her husband.

43. All of us, men and women, are blessed—we who see Śiva, the lord of all, the husband of Pārvatī.

Brahmā said :—

44. Saying thus they worshipped Śiva with sandal paste and raw rice grains. They showered Him with fried grains respectfully.

45. The ladies standing near Menā were enthusiastically praising the good luck of Menā and the mountain.

46. Hearing the auspicious stores and anecdotes of the ladies, the lord became delighted, O sage, along with Viṣṇu and others.

CHAPTER FORTYSIX

(*The arrival of the bridegroom*)

Brahmā said:—

1. The delighted Śiva accompanied by His Bhūtas, Gaṇas, gods and others went to the abode of the mountain zealously.

2. Menā, the exquisite beloved of Himācala, got up from her seat and went into the harem along with the women-folk.

3. For the customary Nīrājana (waving of lights) rites of Śiva, the chaste lady came near the entrance with lights and vessels in her hands along with womenfolk of the sages.

4. Menā saw with pleasure lord Śiva, the bridegroom

of Pārvatī, served by all the gods and who by that time had come there.

5-11. Śiva had the complexion of the colour of the Campaka flower. He had only one face but retained the three eyes. The face was beaming with a simple smile. He was bedecked in gems and gold and wore a garland of Mālatī flowers. The gemset crown was lustrous. He wore brilliant necklaces. He was bedecked in bangles and bracelets of fine workmanship. He was shining well with the two clothes of great value, fine texture and unrivalled beauty and purified in fire. Highly embellished in sandal paste, aguru, musk and fine saffron, he had a gemset mirror in his hand and his eyes were lustrous with the collyrium. He was shedding a halo around him enveloping everything. He was extremely beautiful. He appeared to be very young. His limbs had the full complement of their ornaments. He was very attractive to the ladies. He was not nervous or self-conscious. His lotuslike face had the brilliance of a thousand moons. His body shone with a refulgence more than that of a thousand cupids. He was beautiful in every limb. Seeing the lord thus as her son-in-law, Menā forgot all her grief. She was glad.

12. She praised her good luck. She congratulated Pārvatī, the mountain and his entire family. She congratulated herself. She rejoiced again and again.

13. Gazing at her son-in-law joyously with beaming face, the chaste lady performed the Nīrājana rite.

14. Remembering what Pārvatī had told her, Menā was agreeably surprised and with a beaming lotus-like face full of delight she muttered to herself.

15. "I see the beauty of the great lord far in excess of what Pārvatī had told me before.

16. Śiva's loveliness cannot be expressed adequately now." In the same state of pleasant surprise she went in.

17. The young ladies proclaimed that the daughter of the mountain was fortunate. Some girls said that she had become a goddess.

18. Some said—"Such a bridegroom has never been seen, not to our knowledge." Some girls said to Menā—"Pārvatī is really blessed."

19. The chief of Gandharvas sang songs. The celestial damsels danced. On seeing Śiva's lovely form, the gods were delighted.

20. The instrument players played on musical instruments in sweet tones showing their diverse skill.

21. The delighted Himācala too carried out the customary rites of reception at the entrance. Menā also jubilantly took part in the same along with all the women-folk.

22. She made formal inquiries about the health of the bridegroom and gladly went into the house. Śiva went to the apartments assigned to Him along with the Gaṇas and the gods.

23. In the meantime the servant-maids in the harem of the mountain took Pārvatī out in order to worship the tutelar family deity.

24-30. There the gods saw joyously with winkless eyes the bride of dark complexion like the collyrium, and fully bedecked in ornaments in every limb. With a side glance she was respectfully looking at the three-eyed lord avoiding the eyes of others. With a gentle smile playing in her face she appeared very beautiful. Her plaited hair was thickly grown and looked beautiful. Decorative lines over her body were exquisite. She had the Tilaka with musk and saffron. Gemset necklace shone over her chest. Bracelets and bangles of gems and jewels shone brilliantly. With diamond ear-rings her cheeks appeared brilliant. Her rows of teeth sparkled like diamonds. Red lac applied over her lips which were naturally red like Bimba fruits was exquisite. She had a gemset mirror in her hand. A toy lotus also embellished her. Sandal paste, aguru musk and saffron were smeared over the body by her. Her feet and soles were naturally red. Tinkling anklets added to their beauty.

31. On seeing the primordial deity, the mother of the universe along with Menakā,. the gods and others bowed down their heads with great devotion.

32. The three-eyed deity saw her with the corner of an eye and was glad. On seeing the shapely body of Satī he forgot the pangs of separation.

33. With his eyes riveted to her, he forgot everything

else. Hair stood on ends all over his body, as he continued seeing her with delight.

34. Then Pārvatī went out of the city, worshipped the family goddess and returned to her parental abode along with the brahmin women.

35. Śiva went to the apartments indicated by Himācala, joyously along with the gods, Viṣṇu and Brahmā.

36. All of them stayed there with joy, attending on Śiva. They were duly honoured by Himavat, the mountainous lord.

CHAPTER FORTYSEVEN

(The ceremonious entry of Śiva into the inner apartments of the palace of Himavat)

Brahmā said:—

1. Then the chief of mountains caused the investiture rite with the sacred thread for Pārvatī and Śiva with the Vedic hymns recited enthusiastically.

2. Then Viṣṇu, the other gods and the sages entered the inner apartments of the palace of the mountain enthusiastically at the request of Himācala.

3. After performing the conventional rites in accordance with the Vedic injunctions and the social customs they decorated Pārvatī with the ornaments provided by Śiva.

4. First of all she was bathed, then bedecked with the ornaments. The Nīrājana rites too were also performed by the maids and brahmin women.

5. The daughter of the mountain and the beloved of Śiva, the lovely lady shone with the pair of fresh clothes.

6. O sage, an exquisite divine jacket studded with various gems was worn by the goddess who shone all the more.

7. She wore a necklace studded with divine gems. Costly bangles of pure gold were worn by her.

8. The lovely lady, the daughter of the great mountain, the mother of the three worlds staying there itself meditated on Śiva and shone thereby.

9. Then there was great jubilation delighting both the sides. Different kinds of charitable gifts were distributed among the brahmins.

10. Monetary gifts were distributed among others. They were diverse. Many songs were sung jubilantly.

11. Then Viṣṇu, I the creator, Indra and other gods as well as the sages joined in jubilation with great pleasure.

12. Then after bowing humbly to Pārvatī with devotion and remembering the lotus-like feet of Śiva they returned to their camps obtaining the permission of Himavat.

13. In the meantime Garga, a great expert in the science of astrology, spoke to Himavat, the lord of mountains.

Garga said: —

14. O Himavat, O lord, O father of Pārvatī, now fetch Śiva to your palace for the marriage rites.

Brahmā said:—

15. On realising that the auspicious time for the marriage rites had been intimated by Garga, the mountain rejoiced much.

16. With the desire to bring Śiva there, the mountain gladly sent mountains, brahmins and others.

17. The mountains and brahmins with auspicious holy objects in their hands jubilantly went to the place where lord Śiva stood.

18. Then the sound of the Vedic chants, musical instruments, songs and dances jubilantly arose there.

19. On hearing the loud sound of musical instruments trumpets etc. the attendants of Śiva simultaneously got up joyously along with the gods and sages.

20. With great joy in their minds they said to one another—"O here come the mountains to take Śiva over there !

21. The auspicious hour for marriage rites has come. We consider that our fortune is imminent.

22. Indeed we are highly blessed as to witness the marriage ceremony of Śiva and Pārvatī, highly portentous of the good fortune of all the worlds."

Brahmā said:—

23. Even as these confabulations were going on, the ministers of the lord of mountains came there.

24. They approached Śiva, Viṣṇu and others and made their submission that the time for the celebration of marriage had arrived and that they would please hasten to the palace.

25. On hearing that, O sage, Viṣṇu and others rejoiced much and cried shouts of victory to the mountain.

26. Śiva too rejoiced much eager that he was approaching Pārvatī but kept the signs of joy within his mind alone in a wonderfully serene manner.

27. Then the ceremonial ablution with the sacred articles of toilet, was performed by the delighted trident-bearing lord eager to bless the worlds.

28. The bath being over He wore fine clothes. He was attended upon by the guardians of the quarters and surrounded by several others. He was then seated on the shoulders of the Bull.

29. With the lord in front, all of them entered the palace of Himavat playing on various musical instruments and exhibiting their eagerness.

30. The brahmins sent by Himavat and the excellent mountains enthusiastically went ahead of Śiva.

31. The great royal umbrella was held aloft over the great lord. He was fanned by chowries and a canopy was spread over Him.

32. Viṣṇu, Indra, the other guardians of the quarters and I going ahead shone with great brilliance and splendour.

33. In that great festivity conches were blown, drums were beaten and the musical instruments, paṭaha, Ānaka and Gomukha were played on, repeatedly.

34. Musicians sang auspicious songs. Dancing girls danced to the tune.

35. Accompanied by these, attended upon by all important gods and with flowers showered on Him delightedly, the sole kinsman of the universe walked ahead shedding lordly splendour.

36. Lord Śiva, eulogised with many hymns of praise, entered the sacrificial altar. He was duly worshipped.

37. The excellent mountains jubilantly made Śiva dismount the bull and lovingly took Him within.

38. After duly bowing to Śiva who arrived there with the gods and Gaṇas, Himavat performed the Nīrājana with great devotion.

39. Praising his own good luck and bowing to all the gods, sages and others jubilantly he honoured them suitably.

40. The mountain, after offering Pādya and Arghya to them, took Śiva along with Viṣṇu and the important gods, within.

41. In the quadrangle inside he made us, Viṣṇu, Śiva and other important persons sit on gemset thrones.

42. The Nīrājana rites was then performed by Menā, her maids and the brahmin women as well as other ladies of the city with joy.

43. The necessary rites such as offering of Madhuparka etc. tó Śiva, the supreme soul, were joyously performed by the priest who knew his duties.

44-45. O sage, urged by me, the priest carried out the auspicious rites relevant to the context after entering the enclosure where the altar had been built along with Himavat. Pārvatī bedecked in all her ornaments was seated as the bride.

46. She was seated over the raised platform and Śiva was led along with Viṣṇu and me.

47. Waiting for the auspicious Lagna befitting marriage, Bṛhaspati and others became jubilant.

48. Garga was seated in the place where the chronometer[107] had been kept. The Oṁkāra Mantra was repeated

107. Ghaṭikā or a waterclock was not only useful for carrying the nuptial programme at proper times but was also symbolical of time that ruled over the entire universe.

during the interval before the Lagna.

49. Repeating the Puṇyāha mantras, Garga lifted the handful of rice-grains and handing them over to Pārvatī he made her shower it on Śiva.

50. Śiva was duly worshipped by the joyful and sweet-faced Pārvatī with the rice-grains mixed with curd and Darbha water.

51. Gazing at Śiva for whom great penance had been performed by her formerly, Pārvatī shone beaming with pleasure.

52. Requested by me and the sages Garga and others, Śiva, following the worldly conventions worshipped her.

53. Thus, worshipping each other Śiva and Pārvatī identifying themselves with the universe, shone well.

54. Both of them, enveloped by the glory of the three worlds and gazing at each other, were offered the Nīrājana by Lakṣmī and other ladies particularly.

55. The brahmin ladies and the citizen ladies performed the Nīrājana rites. All of them derived great pleasure and gaiety on seeing Śiva and Pārvatī.

CHAPTER FORTYEIGHT

(Description of Marriage)

Brahmā said:—

1. In the meantime, urged by the priest Garga Himavat started the rite of marriage in the company of Menā.

2. Himavat and Menā held the gold pot on either side. Himavat was bedecked in fine clothes and ornaments.

3. The joyous mountain with the assistance of his priest wooed the bridegroom after offering water, clothes, ornaments, sandal paste etc.

4. Then the brahmins were requested by Himavat

"May the rite be formally started after narrating the Tithi etc. The auspicious hour has come."

5. After saying "So be it", the excellent brahmins who knew the proper time proclaimed the Tithi etc. very delightedly.

6. Then Himācala mentally urged with pleasure by lord Śiva, the cause of great enjoyment, smilingly spoke to Śiva.

7. "O Śiva, please do not delay. Please mention your genealogy, saintly lineage,[108] family, name and your Veda along with your branch of the Vedas."

Brahmā said:—

8. On hearing these words of Himavat, Śiva of sweet face, turned His face away. He without sorrow attained a pitiable plight.

9. When lord Śiva stood thus unable to say anything in reply and was seen so by the gods, sages, Gandharvas, Yakṣas, and Siddhas, O Nārada, you did something laughable.

10. Urged by Śiva mentally O Nārada, you, the knower of Brahman with mind fixed in Śiva, played on your Vīṇā.

11. You were forbidden strictly by the lord of mountains, Viṣṇu, gods, sages and by me.

12. When at the will of Śiva you did not desist from it, you were again spoken to thus by the mountain then—"Do not play on the Vīṇā now."

13. O celestial sage, O wise one, when you were thus strenuously forbidden, you remembered Śiva and spoke to the lord of the mountains.

Nārada said:—

14. You have been utterly deluded. You do not know

108. Before the bride is given away to the bridegroom, the names of the ancestors of both the parties with Gotra and Pravara are announced loudly so that the people assembled should know that both, the bride and the bridegroom, come of good families, the pedigree of which can be traced to many generations. The ceremony is called Gotroccāra in the Gṛhyasūtras.

anything about Śiva of whom you speak. You have no inner vision.

15. Śiva was directly asked by you to mention His Gotra. On this occasion these words are utterly ridiculous and derisible.

16. O mountain, even Viṣṇu, Brahmā and other gods do not know His Gotra, family and name. What then can be said about others ?

17. It was a result of the severe penance of Pārvatī that Śiva was seen by you, O mountain, in one day according to whose calculation a crore of Brahmās become annihilated.

18. He is the formless supreme Brahman. He is attributeless. He is greater than Primordial Nature. He has no shape, is free from aberrations He is the master of delusion. He is greater than the greatest.

19. He has no Gotra, family or name. He is independent. He is favourably disposed to His devotees. At His will He assumes bodies taking many names. He is full of attributes.

20. He is sugotrin (having good gotra) as well as devoid of gotra. He is of noble family as well as devoid of a family. Thanks to Pārvatī's penance. He has now become your son-in-law, There is no doubt about it.

21. The whole world consisting of the mobile and immobile has been deluded by Him in His divine sport. O excellent mountain, even the wisest of men does not know Him.

22. The head of lord Śiva of phallic image was not seen by Brahmā. Viṣṇu who went to the nether worlds did not see His foot. How surprised he was.

23. O excellent mountain, of what avail is this talk ? Śiva's magical power is inscrutable. The three worlds, Viṣṇu Brahmā and others too are subservient to Him.

24. Hence, O father of Pārvatī, ponder over this deeply. No doubt need be entertained by you even slightly with respect to this bridegroom of your choice.

Brahmā said:—

25. O sage, after saying this, you, of perfect wisdom,

who carried out the will of Śiva replied again to the mountain after delighting him with your words.

Nārada said:—

26. O dear, O great mountain, O father of Pārvatī, listen to my words. After hearing them, give your daughter to Śiva.

27. Know that the divine sound alone is the gotra, and family of Śiva in His divine form, who assumes forms in His divine sport.

28. Śiva is identical with Nāda.[109] And Nāda is identical with Śiva. There is no difference between the two—Nāda and Śiva.

29. O lord of mountains, Nāda being prior to Śiva in His sportive, attributive form, Nāda is the most excellent of all.

30. Hence, O Himācala, mentally urged by Śiva, the lord of all, I played upon my lute.

Brahmā said:—

31. O sage, on hearing your words, Himavat, the lord of mountains was satisfied and the bewilderment in his mind vanished.

32. Then Viṣṇu, the other gods and the sages said "Well done, Well done". They were freed of all bewilderment.

33. The shrewd people realised the majesty of lord Śiva. They were pleasantly surprised and began to say to one another.

34. "Śiva is of the form of knowledge. He is greater than the greatest. It is at His bidding that the vast universe is born. He is of independent movement. He can be realised by the greatest concentration. He, the lord of the three worlds, is now seen by us."

35. Then Meru and the excellent mountains became agitated and simultaneously spoke to Himavat, the lord of mountains.

109. Nāda is a mystical sound identical with Śiva which symbolises his mystical origin.

The mountains said:—

36. O mountain, be firm and stand by your decision to give your daughter. If you say "No", you stand to lose. We speak the truth. Do not hesitate. Let the girl be given to Śiva.

Brahmā said:—

37. On hearing the words of his friends, Himavat urged by Brahmā gave his daughter to Śiva.

38. "O lord Śiva, I am giving this girl, my daughter to you as your wife. O lord of all, be pleased to accept her."

39. Himavat gave his daughter Pārvatī, the mother of the three worlds, to Śiva the great, repeating the mantra "Tasmai Rudrāya Mahate".

40. Placing the hand of Pārvatī in the hand of Śiva the mountain rejoiced much mentally. He had the satisfaction of crossing the ocean of his ambition.

41. Śiva grasped the lotus-like hand of Pārvatī in his hand repeating the Vedic mantras. Lord Śiva was greatly delighted.

42. Touching the ground and showing the worldly course of action, O sage, Śiva recited the mantra "Kāmasya Kodāt".[110]

43. There was a great jubilation everywhere that gladdened everyone. Cries of "Victory" rose up in the heaven, the earth and the sky.

44. The delighted people shouted "Well done" and "Obeisance to you". The Gandharvas sang sweetly with pleasure. The celestial damsels danced.

45. The citizens, the subjects of Himavat rejoiced in their minds. There was great auspicious jubilation.

46. Viṣṇu, Indra, I and the gods were delighted, with the faces beaming like full blown lotuses.

47. Then the gleeful lord of mountains gave the ancillary articles of present to Śiva in a fitting manner.

48. Then his kinsmen worshipped Śiva with devotion

110. VS. 7.48. The mantra begins with कोऽदात् कस्मा अदात्

and gave Pārvatī and monetary presents to Śiva in accordance with the various injunctions of the Śāstras.

49. O excellent sage, in order to please Śiva and Pārvatī, the delighted Himavat presented many gifts of articles.

50. He gave to Śiva some articles as dowry. Different kinds of gems and gemset vessels were given to him.

51. He gave a hundred thousand cows, a hundred horses duly fitted up and a hundred thousand servant maids of loving nature and endowed with all necessary articles.

52. O sage, he gave a crore of elephants and chariots inlaid with gold and made beautiful by gems.

53. Thus Himavat attained perfect satisfaction after giving his daughter Pārvatī to Śiva, the great lord, in accordance with the rules.

54. Then the lord of mountains with palms joined in reverence eulogised lord Śiva joyously with the hymns of the Yajurveda.[111]

55. Then at his behest, the sages jubilantly performed the holy ablution over the head of Pārvatī. Being conversant with the Vedas he asked them specially to perform this.

56. Repeating the names of lord Śiva, they performed Paryukṣaṇa rite.[112] There was a great jubilation and gaiety, O sage.

CHAPTER FORTYNINE

(*The delusion of Brahmā*)

Brahmā said:—

1. Then at my behest, the lord made the brahmins kindle the sacrificial fire and performed the homa, placing Pārvatī on the lap.

111. Mādhyandina is a popular recension of the white Yajurveda of which the mantras are used by the priests in the nuptial and other ceremonies.

112. It is a sprinkling of water collected from the sacred rivers by means of the leaves of sacred trees.

2. Śiva poured offerings into the fire with Mantras from ṚK, Yajus and Sāma Vedas. Pārvatī's brother Maināka offered handfuls of fried grains.[113]

3. Then according to the worldly convention, Pārvatī and Śiva performed the circumambulation[114] round the fire, O dear.

4. The husband of Pārvatī exhibited a wonderful feat. O celestial sage, listen to that. I shall mention it out of love for you.

5. On that occasion, deluded by Śiva's power of illusion I stared at the feet of the goddess as well as the crescent-shaped nails.

6. On seeing them, O celestial sage, I became overwhelmed by passion. My mind was greatly disturbed.

7. Deluded by the cupid I stared at her limbs frequently. Then, immediately after staring at them, my semen dropped on the ground.

8. I, the grandfather, was ashamed by the emission of my semen. O sage, I pressed the penis secretly with my feet.

9. O Nārada, on coming to know of it, the great God Śiva became furious. He wanted to kill me immediately because I was overwhelmed by lust.

10. O Nārada, there was great hue and cry everywhere. All the people trembled. Even Viṣṇu, the sustainer of the universe, was terrified.

11. O sage, then Viṣṇu and other gods eulogised Śiva who was blazing furiously and who attempted to kill me.

The gods said:—

12. O lord of gods, O pervader of the universe, O Sadāśiva, O lord of the universe, O lord of the world or the very world itself, be pleased.

13. You are the supreme soul, the supreme lord and the cause of all emotions. You are free from aberrations,

113. The brother of the bride pours out of his joined hands into her joined hands fried rice grains mixed with Śamī leaves. The bride sacrifices them with firmly joined hands standing, while the bridegroom recites the verses. For details see P.G.S. 1.6. 1-2.

114. See Note 70. P. 358.

devoid of wastage. You are eternal, free from suspicions and doubts. You are undying. You are the great god.

14. You are Truth, Brahman and Consciousness. You are imperishable, from whom have originated the beginning, the end and the middle of visible worlds, even I too. These visible things are not the true ones.

15. The sages, desirous of liberation, worship and meditate upon your lotus feet. They are steady in their resolve. They avoid attachment on either side.

16. You are the perfect Brahman, the nectar, free from grief, devoid of attributes and the great one. You are the sole bliss, free from excitement, aberrations and even static and insentient.

17. You are the cause of production, sustenance and dissolution of the universe Śiva, the lord of souls, is greater than the universe. He is free from the necessity of its aid. He is always pervasive.

18. You are the One, both Sat and Asat. You are non-dual. Gold whether as the basic metal or as the ready made ornament does not alter in its basic and intrinsic essence.

19. People have doubts in you by their ignorance. The remedy for illusion lies in thinking on your Nirguṇa aspect, not by itself.

20. O supreme lord, we are blessed by your very vision. O Śiva, you are the bestower of supreme bliss to the people who are steady in their devotion. Have mercy.

21. You are the primordial Being, You have no beginning. You are the Puruṣa beyond the Prakṛti. You are the lord of the universe. You are the lord of the world. You are free from aberrations. You are greater than the greatest.

22. Your Rājasika manifestation is Brahmā, the grandfather. O lord, thanks to your grace, Viṣṇu is Puruṣottama by your Sāttvika nature.

23. Your Tāmasika manifestation is Rudra, the fire of dissolution. Śiva is beyond the attributes, the great lord and omnipresent.

24. O great lord of universal form, the manifest, the

great principle, the elements, the Tanmātras, and the sense-organs are presided over by you.

25. O supreme lord, O merciful Śiva, O lord of gods, be pleased, O best of Beings, be pleased.

26. The seven oceans[115] are your clothes. The quarters are your long arms. The firmament is your head, O all-pervasive. The sky is your navel. The wind is your nose.

27. O lord, the fire, the sun and the moon are your eyes. The clouds are your hair. The planets and the stars are your ornaments.

28. O lord of gods, how shall I eulogise you ? O supreme lord, you are beyond description. O Śiva, you are incomprehensible to the mind.

29. Obeisance to Thee, the five-faced Rudra. Obeisance to thee, with fifty crores of forms. Obeisance to thee, the lord of three deities. Obeisance to the most excellent one. Obeisance to the principle of learning.

30. Obeisance, Obeisance to the inexpressible, the eternal, the lightning-flamed, the flame-coloured. Obeisance to lord Śiva.

31. Obeisance, obeisance to thee stationed in the world with the form resembling a crore of lightning streaks, consisting of eight corners and very lustrous.

Brahmā said:—

32. On hearing their words, lord Śiva was delighted. Favourably disposed to his devotees he offered me freedom from fear.

33. O dear, then Viṣṇu, the other gods and the sages began to smile and became merry.

34. O dear, my semen pressed very frequently, turned into several sparkling drops.

35. Thousands of sages called Vālakhilyas sprang up from the sparkling drops.

36. O sage, then the sages, gathered near me with great pleasure and said— "O father O father".

115. The seven mythical oceans are personified here. For details see S.M. Ali, Geography of the Purāṇas, Ch. II. on seven continents and oceans.

37. They were then sternly told by you urged by Śiva's wish. The Vālakhilyas were rebuked angrily by you.

Nārada said:—

38. All of you together go to the mountain Gandhamādana.[116] You shall not stay here. No purpose shall be served by your staying here.

39. After performing great penance you will become great sages and disciples of the sun. This has been said by me at the behest of Śiva.

Brahmā said:—

40. Thus addressed, all the Vālakhilyas went immediately to the mountain Gandhamādana after bowing to Śiva.

41. O excellent sage, I was able to breathe fearlessly, thanks to Viṣṇu and others, the noble souls urged by lord Śiva.

42. After knowing that Śiva favourably disposed to His devotees can do everything and dispel the pride of the wicked, I eulogised Him, the lord of all.

43. O great God, O lord of gods, the ocean of mercy, you are the creator, the sustainer and the annihilator of everything.

44. It is at your will that the entire world including the mobile and immobile is kept checked as the bulls amongst a series of cows.

45. After saying so I bowed to Him with palms joined in reverence. Viṣṇu and others too eulogised lord Śiva.

46. On hearing the piteous eulogies made by me as well as by Viṣṇu and others lord Śiva became delighted.

47. He granted me the boon of fearlessness delightedly. All were happy, O sage, and I rejoiced much.

116. See Note 309 P. 405

CHAPTER FIFTY

(*Description of fun and frolic*)

Brahmā said:—

1. O Nārada, thereafter at the bidding of Śiva, I carried out the concluding ceremonies of the wedding of Śiva and Pārvatī joyously through the sages.

2. Their ceremonial head-bath[117] was respectfully gone through. The brahmins showed the Pole star Dhruva[118] with respect.

3. Thereafter the rite of Hṛdayālambhana[119] was performed. O great brahmin, then Svastipāṭha[120] was jubilantly celebrated.

4. At the behest of the brahmins, Śiva applied Red powder[121] on the head of Pārvatī. The lustre of Pārvatī at that time was beyond description and very wondrous.

5. Thereafter at the bidding of the brahmins both sat on the same cushion and attained such a lustre as accentuated joy in the hearts of the devotees.

6. O sage, then they returned to their apartment and, at my behest performed the rite of Saṁsrava Prāśana*, of wonderful sportive nature that they were.

7. When the sacrificial rites in marriage ceremony were thus concluded duly, lord Śiva gave the Pūrṇapātra[122] to me, the creator of the worlds.

117. The bride is sprinkled on her head. The ceremony renders the bride free from physical troubles and sanctifies her for the married life.

118. In the night the bridegroom shows to the bride the polar star—a performance suggestive of firmness in the conjugal life.

119. The husband touches the heart of the bride reaching over her right shoulder. The heart is the centre of feelings. By touching it the husband symbolically tries to rouse them and make them flow out to meet his own heart and thus unite them in the world of love.

120. VS 25.19 and Ibid 25.14. These verses are usually recited on auspicious occasions.

121. The printing of red lead on the head of the bride by the bridegroom is the most striking feature of the present day marriage ceremonies, nowhere mentioned in the Gṛhyasūtras. The later Paddhatis, however, refer to this custom. Cf. Gadādhara on P.G.S. 1.8.9.

अत्राचारात्स्त्रियः सिन्दूरदानादि कुर्वन्ति ।

* It is the ceremonial licking up of the remains of libation.

122. At the end of the nuptial ceremony, a vessel full of raw rice grains is given to the officiating priest who conducts the nuptials. A cow, as a ceremonial gift, is also offered along with some hard cash and clothes.

8. Śiva then made the gift of cows to the presiding priest. Other gifts of auspicious nature were also made.

9. He gave the brahmins a hundred gold pieces each. A crore of gems and other articles were distributed among the people as gifts.

10. The Gods, mobile and immobile creatures, rejoiced much. Shouts of victory rose up.

11. Auspicious sounds of music were heard everywhere. The sound of the musical instruments was pleasing and increased the joy of everyone.

12. Viṣṇu accompanied by me, all the gods and sages took leave of the mountain and returned to their abodes.

13. The ladies in the city of the mountain then took Śiva and Pārvatī to the abode of Kubera.

14. There several social customs and conventions were gone through by the ladies. All round, there was great jubilation.

15. Then the couple, benefactors of the people, were led near the bed chamber. It was exquisitely decorated according to convention.

16. The ladies of the city of Himavat approached them and performed the customary auspicious rites.

17. Shouting cries of victory they untied the knot.[123] They were smiling and ogling at one another with hairs standing on their ends due to pleasure.

18-20. Entering the bedchamber and gazing at lord Śiva, the beautiful damsels were much fascinated and they praised their good luck. He was gorgeously dressed in fine clothes. He was bedecked in gemset ornaments. He appeared to be in the prime of youth. He fascinated the ladies with charming loveliness. He was smiling gently and glancing at everyone lovingly.

21-23. Then the sixteen celestial ladies arrived there and saw the couple with great respect. They were Sarasvatī, Lakṣmī, Sāvitrī, Jāhnavī, Aditi, Śacī, Lopāmudrā, Arundhatī,

123. Tying together, so as to form a knot, the garments of the bride and bridegroom at the commencement of the marriage ceremony is called Granthibandhana while untying the same after the ceremony is called Granthinirmocana.

Ahalyā, Tulasī, Svāhā, Rohiṇī,. Vasundharā, Śatarūpā, Saṁjñā and Rati.

24. There were several virgins of the gods, Nāgas, and the sages. They were charming and attractive. Who can enumerate them ?

25. A gemset throne was offered to Śiva who sat on it joyously The celestial ladies made these sweet witty remarks to Him one by one.

Sarasvatī said:—

26. O great lord, Satī who was more than your life to you has now joyously rejoined you. O lover, seeing the face of your beloved of moonlike splendour, cast off the heat of your distress.

27. Spend your time, O lord of time, in the close embrace of Satī. Thanks to my fervent wish, there will be no separation at any time between you both.

Lakṣmī said:—

28. O lord of gods, leave off your shyness. Take Satī to your bosom and stand close to her. Why do you feel shy of her without whom your vital airs may go off.

Sāvitri said:—

29. O Śiva, give the sweets to Satī and eat them yourself. Do not be in a flutter. Perform Ācamana and offer her betel leaves along with camphor.

Jāhnavī said:—

30. Take hold of the hand of your beloved wife glittering with gold and stroke her hair. There is no higher pleasure at the hands of her lover to a loving maiden than this.

Aditi said:—

31. At the conclusion of the meal, for the purity of the mouth, please give water. The love of this pair is very rare to be seen.

Śacī said:—

32. Why should you be shy of your beloved for whom you lamented and roamed here and there always keeping her in your heart?

Lopāmudrā said:—

33. O Śiva, a duty shall be performed by women in the bedchamber after the meal. Hence give Tāmbūla (betel leaves with spices) to Śivā and go to bed.

Arundhatī said:—

34. This lady was not intended at first to be given to you. But it is after my efforts that she has been given to you. Hence you must have a good dalliance with her.

Ahalyā said:—

35. Leave off your old age. Be extremely youthful so that Menā whose mind is fixed in her daughter may approve of you.

Tulasī said:—

36. Satī was formerly abandoned by you. Kāma too was burnt. Then O lord, how is it that Vasiṣṭha is sent as an emissary now.

Svāhā said:—

37. Now, O great lord, be steady in the words of women. There is a duty for women after marriage, maturity and loftiness of demeanour.

Rohiṇī said:—

38. O lord, expert in erotic science and technique, fulfil the desire of Pārvatī. Loving that you are, try to cross the ocean of the love of your beloved.

Vasundharā said:—

39. O lord, the knower of innermost thoughts, you know the emotions of love-oppressed maidens. It is not only the husband that she cherishes in her heart but she keeps the supreme lord too there for ever.

Śatarūpā said:—

40. A hungry person will not be satisfied until he partakes of a sweet hearty meal. O Śiva do everything whereby the woman will be satiated.

Saṁjñā said:—

41. Now please send off Śiva along with Pārvatī to a secluded spot after making the bed, giving them betal and keeping the gem-bedecked lamp ready near by.

Brahmā said:—

42. On hearing these words of the women, lord Śiva, who was free from aberrations and was the supreme preceptor of great Yogins spoke to them.

Śiva said:—

43. O dignified ladies, do not utter such words to me. You are the chaste mothers of the worlds, how do you speak so trivially in regard to your son?

Brahmā said:—

44. On hearing the words of Śiva, the celestial ladies were ashamed. In their excitement they became motionless like dolls in a picture.

45. Eating the sweets and performing Ācamana lord Śiva was much delighted. In the company of His wife He chewed the betal with camphor.

CHAPTER FIFTYONE

(*The resuscitation of Kāma*)

Brahmā said:—

1. At that time, thinking that the hour was favourable, Rati hopefully spoke to Śiva who is favourably disposed towards depressed people.

Rati said:—

2. Why did you reduce my beloved husband to ashes without gaining any interest when he had come near you with Pārvatī? He was my only fortunate possession very rare to get.

3. Give me back my husband, the lord of my journey of life who used to work lovingly with me. Remove my distress caused by separation.

4. O lord Śiva, in the great festival of your marriage, all people are happy. I alone am unhappy without my husband.

5. O lord, make me possessed of my husband. O Śiva, be pleased. O lord, friend of the distressed, please make your words true.

6. Excepting you, who is there in the three worlds including the mobile and immobile creatures who can destroy my sorrow. Knowing this, be merciful.

7. O lord, merciful to the depressed, make me jubilant at the jubilant celebration of your marriage that gives pleasure to everyone.

8. There is no doubt in this, that only when my lord is resuscitated will your sportive dalliance with your beloved Pārvatī be complete and perfect.

9. You are competent to do everything because you are the supreme lord. O lord of all, of what avail is this talk. Please resuscitate my husband quickly.

Brahmā said:—

10. After saying thus she gave him the ashes of the cupid along with the bag in which they had been contained.

"O lord, O lord", saying thus she lamented much in front of Śiva.

11. On hearing the lamentation of Rati, Sarasvatī and other celestial ladies wept bitterly and spoke in piteous tones.

The celestial ladies said:—

12. Obeisance to you, O lord, you are known as favourably disposed to your devotees. You are friend of the distressed, storehouse of mercy. Resuscitate the cupid. Make Rati jubilant.

Brahmā said:—

13. On hearing their words, lord Śiva was delighted. The lord, the ocean of mercy, glanced compassionately.

14. Thanks to the nectarine glance of the Trident-bearing lord, Kāma came out of the ashes, a comely wonder-inspiring body with splendid dress and features.

15. On seeing her husband in the same form as before, wielding the bow and the arrows and smiling, Rati bowed to lord Śiva.

16. She became contented. With her husband resuscitated and with palms joined in reverence she eulogised the lord, the bestower of her husband, frequently.

17. On hearing the eulogy of Kāma and his wife, Śiva was delighted and he spoke with his heart melting with pity.

Śiva said:—

18. O Kāma, I am delighted by your eulogy in the company of your wife. O self-born, tell me the boon you desire. I shall grant it.

Brahmā said:—

19. On hearing these words of Śiva, Kāma was highly delighted. Humbly and in faltering accents he spoke with palms joined in reverence.

Kāma said:—

20. O lord of gods, O ocean of mercy, if you, the

lord of all, are pleased with me please be delightful to me.

21. O lord, please forgive my fault formerly perpetrated by me. Please grant me great affection towards my people and devotion to your feet.

Brahmā said:—

22. On hearing the words of Kāma, lord Śiva was delighted. Giving consent, the lord of mercy laughingly said.

Lord Śiva said:—

23. O Kāma, I am delighted. O intelligent one, do not fear. Go near Viṣṇu and wait outside.

Brahmā said:—

24. On hearing these words he bowed to, circumambulated and eulogised the lord. Then he went out and bowed to Viṣṇu and gods.

25. Addressing Kāma, the gods congratulated him and offered him their auspicious blessings. Remembering Śiva, Viṣṇu and others spoke to him.

The gods said:—

26. O Kāma, you are blessed. Burnt by Śiva you have been blessed by Him. The lord of all has resuscitated you by means of his sympathetic glance, the Sāttvika part.

27. No man causes happiness or sorrow to another man. Man experiences the fruits of what he does. Who can ward off the destined protection, marriage or consummation at the proper time ?

Brahmā said:—

28. After saying thus, the gods happily honoured him. Viṣṇu and other gods who had realised their desire stayed there with pleasure.

29. He too remained there, at the bidding of Śiva, with great delight. There were shouts of "Victory" "Obeisance" and "well-done".

30. At the bed-chamber Śiva placed Pārvatī on His

left side and fed her with sweets. She too delightedly fed him with sweets in return.

31. Śiva according to the conventions of the world performed the customary rites. Taking leave of Menā and the mountain He came to the audience hall.

32. O sage, there was great jubilation then. Sounds of Vedic chants rose up. People played on the four kinds of musical instruments.

33. Coming back to His apartment, Śiva saluted the sages, Viṣṇu and me according to the worldly convention. He was duly saluted by the gods and others.

34. Shouts of "Victory" and "Obeisance" rose up along with the sound of Vedic mantras which were auspicious and which removed all obstacles.

35. Then Viṣṇu, I (Indra), gods, sages, Siddhas, secondary gods and the Nāgas eulogised Him severally.

The gods said:—

36. O Śiva, be victorious. O lord Śiva, the support of all, be victorious. O Rudra, O great lord, the supporter of the world, be victorious.

37. O Pārvatī's lord, O lord, accentuator of pleasure, O three-eyed one, O lord of all, the lord of illusion, be victorious, be victorious.

38. O lord, devoid of attributes, bereft of desires, O lord beyond all causes, O omnipresent, O playful support of all, O assumer of forms, Obeisance to you, be victorious.

39-40. O lord, bestower of good desires to your devotees, O merciful one, O bliss-formed, assuming forms through magic illusions, be victorious. Be victorious, O kind, O All-souled one, friend of the distressed, storehouse of mercy, O lord of illusion, free from aberrations, whose body is beyond the reach of speech and mind.

Brahmā said:—

41. Eulogising thus, Viṣṇu and others joyously served lord Śiva, the husband of Pārvatī duly, and with great love.

42. O Nārada, Śiva, the lord who had assumed body sportively, granted boons and honour to all present there.

43. O dear one, Viṣṇu and others taking leave of the great lord delightedly returned to their respective places. They were duly honoured and their faces beamed with pleasure.

CHAPTER FIFTYTWO

(The bridegroom's party is fed and Śiva retires to bed)

Brahmā said:—

1. O dear one, then the clever chief of mountains caused suitable arrangements to be made in the courtyard for feeding the visitors.

2. He caused the ground to be swept clean and scrubbed well. Different kinds of fragrant stuffs were used to make the place attractive and pleasing.

3. Then the mountain invited all the gods and others along with the lord for taking food, through his sons and others.

4. O sage, on hearing the invitation of the mountain, the lord accompanied by Viṣṇu, the gods and others went gladly to take His meal.

5. The mountain received the lord and all those duly and made them sit in good seats in the inner apartment.

6. After serving sweet and well-cooked delicious foodstuffs, he requested them to take their food with palms joined in reverence and head bent down.

7. Then duly honoured, Viṣṇu and other gods keeping Sadāśiva at the head took their food.

8. They sat in rows together, took their food simultaneously laughing (and talking).

9. Nandin, Bhṛṅgi, Vīrabhadra and his Gaṇas took their meals separately. The fortunate people took food enthusiastically.

10. The gods, with Indra, the guardians of the quarters all forunate and brilliant took their food cracking jokes and talking.

11. The sages and brahmins, Bhṛgu and other sages sat in separate rows and took their food with pleasure.

12. The Gaṇas of Caṇḍī took their meals and then cracked jokes and talked merrily.

13. After taking meals and rinsing their mouths Viṣṇu and others went to their apartments for rest.

14. At the bidding of Menā, the chaste ladies requested Śiva humbly and made Him stay in the bedchamber where great festivities were going on.

15. Seated on a gemset throne offered by Menā, Śiva surveyed the bedchamber with pleasure.

16. It was brightly illuminated with hundreds of gemset lamps. There were many gemset vessels. Pearls etc. were gorgeously displayed.

17. Gemset mirrors, white chowries, pearl necklaces and gorgeous things were richly displayed.

18. It was unequalled in its divine exquisiteness highly pleasing and richly decorated.

19. It was evincing the powerful influence of the boon granted by Śiva. It appeared to be a replica of Śiva Loka itself.

20. It was richly rendered fragrant with various sweet smelling substances. It was very bright. There was sandal paste and aguru. Beds were richly strewn with flowers.

21. Many wondrous things of variegated colours and shapes were displayed there. It had been constructed in gems by Viśvakarman* himself.

22. In some places replicas of Vaikuṇṭha, Brahmaloka and the cities of the guardians of the quarters were seen.

23. In a certain place the beautiful Kailāsa was represented. In another place Indra's palace was depicted. Over all was represented the Śivaloka.

24. Seeing all these wonderful representations lord Śiva praised Himavat and was very glad.

25. In that bedchamber, in a beautiful gemset couch lord Śiva lay down with pleasure.

26. Himavat fed all his brothers and others with pleasure and attended to the subsequent duties.

27. While the supreme lord had his sleep and the lord of the mountains was engaged in these duties, the night passed away giving place to dawn.

*See Note 301 P. 401; Note 295 P. 389.

28. In the morning the enthusiastic people began to play on different kinds of musical instruments.

29. Viṣṇu and the other gods got up with joy, remembered the lord of gods and excitedly got ready.

30. They got their vehicles ready for the departure to Kailāsa and sent Dharma to Śiva.

31. At the bidding of Viṣṇu, Dharma went near the bed chamber. The Yogin Dharma addressed Śiva, the lord of Yogins, in a manner befitting the context.

Dharma said:—

32. Get up, get up O Śiva, O lord of the Pramathas. Please come over to the audience hall. Make the assembled people gratified.

Brahmā said:—

33. On hearing these words of Dharma lord Śiva laughed. He surveyed him with sympathetic looks and got up from the bed.

34. He laughingly said to Dharma—"You go ahead. I shall come there presently. There is no doubt in this matter.

35. Thus addressed by Śiva, he returned to the audience hall. The lord Śiva too wanted to go.

36. On coming to know of it the ladies came enthusiastically. With their eyes fixed on the feet of Śiva, they sang auspicious songs.

37. Śiva then, in accordance with the worldly customs, went through his morning routine. He took leave of Menā and the mountain and went to the audience hall.

38. There was great jubilation there, O sage. Vedic mantras were recited loudly. The people played on the four kinds of musical instruments.

39. Śiva came to His apartment and bowed to the sages, Viṣṇu and me in accordance with the worldly conventions and was saluted by the gods and others.

40. Shouts of Victory and Obeisance rose up along with the auspicious sound of Vedic chants. There was great tumult.

CHAPTER FIFTYTHREE

(Description of Śiva's return journey)

Brahmā said:—

1. Then Viṣṇu and other gods, the sages and ascetics sent message to the mountain about their intention to leave after finishing their immediate duties.

2. Then the lord of mountains finished his ceremonial ablution and the worship of his favourite deity. Calling his kinsmen in the city, he came to the audience hall joyously.

3. There he worshipped the lord with pleasure and requested him to stay in his house for a few days more along with all the people.

4. "O Śiva" he said "I am contented by your sight. I am blessed since you came here with the gods".

5. Saying these words and many more, the lord of mountains pleaded with palms joined in reverence to the lord along with Viṣṇu and other gods.

6. Then the gods and sages remembered Śiva and spoke with delight.

The gods said:—

7. O lord of the mountains, you are blessed. Your glory is great. Even in the three worlds, there is none equal to you in merit.

8. At your very door, lord Śiva, the supreme Brahman, the goal of the good and favourably disposed to His devotees, has deigned to come along with us, His slaves.

9. O lord of mountains, this audience hall is very excellent. You have honoured us in diverse ways. The foodstuffs served to us were extraordinary. It is impossible to describe them suitably.

10. It is no wonder that everything is perfect where the goddess Pārvatī is present. We too are blessed since we came.

Brahmā said:—

11. Thus there was mutual admiration and glorification of an enlightened nature. There was great jubilation. The

sound of Vedic chant and shouts of victory were heard every where.

12. There were auspicious songs. The celestial damsels danced. The bards sang songs of praise. There was a liberal exchange of monetary gifts.

13. Then the mountain took leave of the lord of gods and went home. He made arrangements for a joyous feast with all paraphernalia in accordance with the rules.

14. He brought the lord with all his attendants and followers for the feast. He was very enthusiastic.

15-16. He washed the feet of Śiva, Viṣṇu and mine with reverence. He seated all of us, including the gods, the sages and others in the altar. The lord of mountains was assisted by his kinsmen.

17. The mountain satiated them with various kinds of juicy foodstuffs. All of them took food including Śiva, Viṣṇu and me.

18. Then the ladies of the city indulged in the customary utterance of foul abusive words laughing, jingling and peeping at all of them.

19. O Nārada, they took their food and rinsed their mouths. Taking leave of the mountain they returned to their apartments fully satisfied and pleased.

20. O sage, on the third day similarly they were thus duly honoured by the lord of mountains with customary gifts.

21. On the fourth day, the rite of Caturthīkarman[124] was performed with due observance. Without this the marriage rites would have been incomplete.

22. There was diverse jubilant festivity. Shouts of "well-done", "Victory" etc were heard. There were exchanges of gifts, sweet music and different kinds of dances.

23. On the fifth day the delighted gods lovingly intimated to the mountain about their desire to go back.

24. On hearing that, the lord of mountains spoke to the gods with palms joined in reverence "O gods, please stay a few days more".

124. This rite is so named because it is performed on the fourth day after the wedding. It is performed at the house of the bride's father before the marriage party leaves it. The purpose of this rite is to remove evil influence from the person of the bride which may cause harm to the family. For details see P.G.S. 1.11.13.

25. Saying thus with great love he made all of us, the lord, Viṣṇu and others stay there for many days, honouring us duly every day.

26. Thus many days elapsed as the gods continued to stay there. Then the gods sent the seven sages to the lord of the mountains.

27. They enlightened the mountain and Menā with what was relevant to the occasion. They told them about Śiva's principles with due praise.

28. O sage, the proposal was agreed to by the great lord. Then Śiva went to the mountain to tell him about the intended journey, along with the gods and others.

29. When the lord of gods started on his journey towards his mountain along with the gods, Menā cried aloud and told the merciful lord.

Menā said:—

30. O merciful lord, do mercifully protect Pārvatī. You are quickly pleased. Hence you will please forgive even a thousand faults in her.

31. My dear daughter is devoted to your lotus-like feet in every birth. Even sleeping or awake she does not think about anything else.

32. O conqueror of death, even on hearing about your devotion she is filled with tears of pleasure and horripilation. On hearing your censure she becomes silent as though dead.

Brahmā said:—

33. Saying this, Menakā dedicated her daughter to Him and crying aloud became unconscious in front of them.

34. When she regained consciousness, Śiva took leave of her and the mountain and set on journey with the gods jubilantly.

35. The gods with the lord and His Gaṇas started on their journey silently. They wished the mountain well.

36-37. The lord and the gods waited in a part outside the city of Himavat for the arrival of Pārvatī there. O great sage, thus I have narrated the journey of Śiva. Now listen to the journey of Pārvatī and of her departure with festivities.

CHAPTER FIFTYFOUR

(Description of the duties of the chaste wife)

Brahmā said:—

1. Then the seven sages spoke to the lord of the mountains—"O mountain, make arrangements for the journey of your daughter today itself."

2. O great sage, on hearing these words and knowing her pangs of separation, the lord of mountains was greatly affected by his love towards her and remained silent for a short while.

3. After some time, the lord of the mountains regained his consciousness and said—"Let it be so". He then sent the message to Menā.

4. O sage, on hearing the message of the mountain, Menā was both delighted and sorry. She immediately set about arranging for her journey.

5. O sage, Menā, the beloved of the mountain, made arrangements for all kinds of festivities in accordance with the tradition of her family and the injunctions of the Vedas.

6. She bedecked Pārvatī with twelve kinds of ornaments and good silken garments of nice border. All kinds of embellishments befitting her royal state were made.

7. Realising Menā's inclinations a chaste brahmin lady instructed Pārvatī in the duties of a chaste wife.

The brahmin lady said:—

8. O Pārvatī, listen to my words with love that accentuate righteousness, that increase the pleasure here and hereafter and afford happiness to those who pay heed to them.

9. A chaste lady sanctifies the worlds, destroys sins and is blessed. None else is so worthy of respect.

10. O Pārvatī, she who serves her husband with love and considers him her sole lord, enjoys all pleasures here and obtains salvation hereafter along with her husband.

11-13. The chaste ladies—Sāvitrī, Lopāmudrā,

Arundhatī, Śāṇḍilyā, Śatarūpā, Anasūyā, Lakṣmī, Svadhā, Satī, Saṁjña, Sumati, Śraddhā, Menā, Svāhā and several others whose names are not mentioned lest the list should be too detailed have attained adoration from all people by their virtue of chastity. They have been honoured by Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Śiva and great sages.

14. Lord Śiva, benefactor of the depressed, worthy of worship and the goal of the good shall be served by you always.

15. The duty of a chaste lady is very important and it has been mentioned in the Vedas and Smṛtis. No other duty is so admirable as this.

16. A chaste lady shall take food only after her husband has taken it. O Śivā, if he stands, the woman too shall remain standing.

17. When he sleeps she can also sleep. But she must intelligently wake up before him. She shall do what is beneficial to him. She shall love him without any sort of deception.

18. O Śivā, she shall never show herself unembellished to him. If for any important work he is on exile she shall never adorn herself.

19. A chaste lady shall never mention her husband's name. If the husband scolds or rebukes her she shall not abuse him in return. Even when beaten by him she shall remain glad and say "I may even be killed, O lord. Be kind to me."

20. When called by him she shall leave the work she is engaged in and approach him immediately. With palms joined in reverence and love she shall bow to him and say as follows.

21. "O lord, be pleased to say what I have been called for." Whenever ordered by him to do any job she shall do it gladly.

22. She shall not stand near the entrance for a long time. She shall not go to other people's house. She shall not take his money, even though it be a little, and give it to others.

23. Without being told she shall arrange the necessary

requisities for his daily worship. She shall wait for the opportunity to do him a timely service.

24. Without the permission of her husband she shall not go even on pilgrimage. She shall eschew the desire to attend social festivities.

25. If a women wants holy water she shall drink the same with which her husband's feet have been washed. All holy rivers are present in that water.

26. She shall partake of the leavings of her husband's food or whatever is given by him saying "This is thy great grace."

27. She shall never take food without first offering due share to the gods, the Pitṛs, the guests, the servants, cows and saintly mendicants.

28. A gentle lady of chaste rites shall always be clever to manage the household with limited requisites. She shall be averse to spend unnecessarily.

29. Without being permitted by her husband she shall not observe fast and other rites. Should it be so, she will derive no benefit. She may fall into hell in other worlds.

30. While the husband is sportively engaged or seated comfortably she shall not worry him to get up under the pretext of attending to some household work.

31. Whether he is impotent, distressed, sick or senile, happy or unhappy, the husband shall never be transgressed.

32. During the three days of her monthly course she shall neither show her face nor speak to him. She shall not speak within his hearing till she becomes pure after her bath.

33. After her bath she shall see her husband's face and not that of anyone else. Or after thinking on her husband she shall then gaze at the sun.

34-35. If a chaste lady wishes for the longevity of her husband she shall not forsake turmeric, vermilion, saffron, collyrium, a blouse, the betel, the necklace, ornaments, brushing and plaiting the hair bangles and earrings.

36. A chaste woman shall never associate intimately with a washerwoman, a harlot, a female ascetic or a fallen woman.

37. She shall not talk to any woman who disparages

or hates her husband. She shall not stand alone anywhere nor shall she take bath in the nude.

38. A chaste lady shall never sleep on a mortar threshing rod, a broom, a grinding stone, a machine or on the threshold.

39. Except at the time of sexual intercourse she shall never show her maturity and initiative. She shall like whatever her husband is interested in.

40. A chaste lady shall be delighted when her husband is delighted and dejected when he is dejected. She shall always wish for his benefit.

41. She shall be virtuous and equanimous in affluence and adversity. She shall have fortitude and shall never go astray.

42. Even when ghee, salt, oil or other things are exhausted she shall not tell her husband openly about it lest he should be subjected to undue strain.

43. O Goddess, the husband is superior to Brahmā, Viṣṇu or Śiva, for a chaste lady her husband is on a par with Śiva.

44. She who transgresses her husband and observes fast and other rites wrecks the longevity of her husband and after death goes to hell.

45. If she furiously retorts to her husband she is born as a bitch in a village or as a vixen in a secluded place.

46. The chaste lady shall never take a higher seat never approach a defiled person, never speak to her husband in agitation.

47. She should avoid slanderous words, shun quarrels and shall not speak aloud or laugh in the presence of elders.

48-49. She who delights her husband delights all the worlds. When she sees her husband coming home she shall hasten to serve him food and water, hand him betel and change of garments, and serve him by massaging his feet. By pleasing words she shall fascinate him and dispel his gloom.

50. What father gives is limited, what brother gives is limited and what the son gives is also limited. A chaste lady shall worship her husband who gives what has no limit.

51. To a wife the husband is god, preceptor, virtue,

holy centre and sacred rite. She should cast off everything and adore him alone.

52. She who forsakes her husband and secretly violates her fidelity is born as a she-owl of cruel nature wasting its days in the hollow of a tree.

53. If she desires to beat her husband in retaliation, she becomes a tiger or a wild cat. She who ogles at another man becomes squint-eyed.

54. She who partakes of sweet dish denying the same to her husband becomes a pig in the village or a wild goat eating its own dung.

55. She who addresses her husband in singular becomes dumb. She who is jealous of a co-wife becomes ill-fated in matrimony again and again.

56. She who casts glance on another person hiding it from her husband becomes one-eyed, twisted-faced or ugly.

57. Just as a body bereft of the soul becomes unclean in a moment, similarly a woman without a husband is always unclean even though she may take a neat bath.

58. The mother, the father and the husband are blessed if there is a chaste lady in the house.

59. The three families—that of the father, that of the mother and that of the husband—enjoy the pleasures of heaven due to the merit of the chaste woman.

60. Disloyal women cause the downfall of the three families, that of the father, mother and husband and become distressed here and hereafter.

61. Wherever the chaste lady sets her foot, the sin is dispelled therefrom and the place is sanctified.

62. Even the sun, moon and wind touch the chaste woman to sanctify themselves and not otherwise.

63. Waters desire the touch of the chaste lady thinking—"Now our sluggishness is gone. Now we are able to purify others".

64. Wife is the root of the household, and of its happiness; she is the source of the fruit of virtue and for the flourishing of the family.

65. In every house there are women proud of their exquisite beauty and comely appearance. But it is only due to the devotion of Śiva that a chaste lady is obtained.

66. The present and the next world can be won through her. A wifeless man is not authorized to perform the rites of gods, Pitṛs guests and sacrifices.

67. He alone is the true householder in whose house there is a chaste lady. The others are devoured by an ogress or old age.

68. Just as the body is purified by a plunge in the Gaṅgā, so everything is sanctified on seeing a chaste woman.

69. A chaste lady is not different from Gaṅgā. She and her husband are like Pārvatī and Śiva. Hence a sensible man shall worship them.

70. The husband is the high tone and the wife is the quarter tone. The husband is austerity and the woman is forbearance. The husband is the fruit and the wife is a sacred rite. O Pārvatī, such a pair is blessed.

71. O daughter of the lord of mountains, thus the duty of a chaste wife is described to you. Now, listen to their classifications with attention and love.

72. O gentle lady, the chaste ladies can be divided into four classes. Even when they are remembered they dispel sins. The divisions comprise of the superior etc.

73. They are superior, middling, inferior and very inferior. I shall explain their characteristics. Listen with attention.

74. O gentle lady, she whose mind is not aware of any one else and who is conscious of her husband even in her dreams is the noblest of all.

75. O daughter of the mountain, she who sees another man as her father, brother or son with a clean conscience is the middling among chaste ladies.

76. O Pārvatī, she who ponders over her duty mentally and desists from going astray is inferior among the chaste. Of course she is pure in conduct.

77. She who remains chaste for fear of her husband or the family is very inferior among the chaste ladies, so say the ancient poets.

78. O Pārvatī, these four types of chaste ladies dispel sins. They sanctify all the worlds. They are delighted here and hereafter.

79. A brahmin who died due to the curse of Varāha

(Boar), was at the request of the three deities, resuscitated by Atri's wife (Anasūyā), thanks to the power of chastity.

80. O Śivā, O daughter of the mountain, knowing this well, you shall render service to your husband every day with pleasure as it bestows all desires.

81. You are the Goddess and the mother of the universe. Śiva Himself is your husband. By remembering you women become chaste.

82. O Pārvatī, O gentle lady, what avails mentioning all this to you. Still I mention this just to follow the worldly convention.

Brahmā said:—

83. Saying this, the brahmin lady stopped and bowed to her. Pārvatī, the beloved of Śiva, derived great pleasure.

CHAPTER FIFTYFIVE

(*Śiva returns to Kailāsa*)

Brahmā said:—

1. Thus instructing the goddess in the rites of a chaste lady, the brahmin lady told Menā while taking leave of her "Make arrangements for her journey".

2. Saying "So be it" she became exasperated by her affection. Controlling herself a little she called Pārvatī to her when her agitation due to imminent separation became all the more unbearable.

3. Embracing her she cried loudly and frequently. Pārvatī too cried uttering piteous words.

4. The beloved of the mountain as well as her daughter became unconscious due to grief. The wives of the gods too fainted on hearing Pārvatī cry.

5. All the ladies cried. Everything became senseless. Who else, even the great lord, the leader of Yogins, cried at the time of departure.

6. In the meantime, Himavat came hurriedly along with his sons, ministers and brahmins.

7. Holding his dear daughter to his bosom and saying "Where are you going ?" with frequent vague vacant glances, he cried due to his fascination.

8. Then the chief priest in the company of other brahmins enlightened everyone. The wise priest by his spiritual discourse was able to convince them easily.

9. With great devotion Pārvatī bowed to her parents and the preceptor. Following the worldly convention she cried aloud frequently.

10. When Pārvatī cried the ladies cried too, particularly the mother Menā, sisters and brothers.

11. Her mother, sister, brothers, father and the other ladies who were affectionately attached to her cried frequently.

12. Then the brahmins respectfully intimated to them the auspicious hour for the starting of the journey and consoled them.

13. Then Himavat and Menā composed themselves and caused the palanquin to be brought for Pārvatī to get in.

14. The brahmin ladies helped her to get into the palanquin. They gave their blessings. Her parents and the brahmins too offered their blessings.

15. Menā and the lord of mountains gave her a royal send-off with various auspicious rare presents not accessible to common people.

16. O sage, Pārvatī started after bowing to the preceptors, elders, father, mother, the brahmins, the chief priest, sisters and the other women.

17. Himavat, the sensible affectionate father with his sons accompanied her as far as the place where the lord was waiting joyously along with the gods.

18. Everyone was jubilant and jolly with love. They bowed to the lord with devotion. Praising Him they returned to Kailāsa.

19. Then Śiva told Pārvatī—"I am reminding you although you know the previous birth. If you remember, speak out. In my divine sport you are always my beloved."

Brahmā said:—

20. On hearing the words of Śiva, Satī Pārvatī the beloved of Śiva replied smiling.

Pārvatī said:—

21. O dear lord, I remember everything as well as the fact that you became a silent ascetic. Obeisance to you. Please do everything necessary now befitting the occasion.

Brahmā said :—

22. On hearing her words as pleasing as the steady flow of nectar, Śiva rejoiced much, eagerly devoted to the way of the world.

23. Getting every requisite thing ready, he fed the gods including Viṣṇu and others with various pleasant things.

24. He fed all the others who had attended His marriage with juicy cooked food of various sorts.

25. After taking food the gods and the Gaṇas, with their womenfolk fully bedecked in gems and jewels bowed to the moon-crested lord.

26. After eulogising Him with pleasing words and circumambulating Him with joy they praised the marriage celebration and returned to their abodes.

27. O sage, Śiva Himself bowed to me and to Viṣṇu following the worldly convention as Viṣṇu had bowed to Kaśyapa.

28. Considering Him the supreme Brahman I eulogised him in the excellent manner after embracing him and offering him my benediction.

29. Viṣṇu and I with palms joined in reverence, took leave of them and praising the marriage of Śiva and Pārvatī went back to Viṣṇu's abode.

30. On the mountain, Śiva stayed with Pārvatī and continued his divine sports with joy. The Gaṇas too were happy and they worshipped the married couple.

31. O dear, I have thus narrated the auspicious story of the marriage of Śiva, that dispels sorrow, generates delight and increases wealth and longevity.

32. He who hears this story with pure mind fixed on them or narrates the same, shall attain Śivaloka.

33. This narrative is said to be wondrous and the cause of everything auspicious. It quells all hindrances and ailments.

34. It is conducive to glory and the attainment of

heaven. It bestows longevity, sons and grandsons, all cherished desires, worldly pleasures and salvation too.

35. It wards off premature death. It is auspicious and it causes peace. It makes bad dreams subside. It is an instrument for the acquisition of keen intellect.

36. It shall be read on all occasions of Śiva's festivals by the people who desire auspicious results. It gives satisfaction to Śiva.

37. At the installation of the idols of the deities this shall be particularly read. At the beginning of all auspicious rites it shall be read with pleasure.

38. With purity in mind and body it shall be heard. All affairs become fruitful thereby. This is true, really true.

RUDRA-SAṀHITĀ

SECTION IV

Kumāra Khaṇḍa

CHAPTER ONE

(The dalliance of Śiva)

1. I salute Śiva who is satisfied with salutation, who loves great devotion, who bestows affection, who makes others too perfect and complete and who is the abode of all fortune and achievements. I salute Śiva who is eulogised by Viṣṇu and Brahmā, who urged by His sympathy assumes visible forms, who bestows truth, who loves truth, whose assets are the threefold truths and who is identical with truth.

Nārada said :—

2. O Brahmā, after marrying Pārvatī and returning to His mountain what did Śiva the benefactor of the worlds do? Please narrate it to me.

3. Who was the son born to Śiva, the great soul, for which purpose the lord, though He rests and revels in Himself, married Pārvatī?

4. O Brahmā, the benefactor of the gods, how was Tāraka[125] slain? Please have pity on me and narrate all this in full.

Sūta said:—

5. On hearing these words of Nārada, Prajāpati was highly delighted and he replied after thinking on Śiva.

125. Tāraka, the son of Vajrāṅga, was a Daitya whose austerities made him formidable to the gods. The present section narrates the birth of Kumāra, known as Skanda, Guha, kārttikeya etc. who slew the demon Tāraka.

Brahmā said:—

6. O Nārada, listen to the tale of Śiva, the moon-crested lord. I shall narrate the story of Guha's[126] birth and the slaying of the demon Tāraka.

7. Let it be heard. I shall tell you the story that destroys all sins, on hearing which a man is freed from all sins.

8. This narrative is sinless. It is a wonderful secret. It dispels the distress caused by sin and wards off all obstacles.

9. It bestows everything auspicious. It is the essence of the Vedas and is pleasing to the ears. It is conducive to happiness. It is the cause of liberation and cuts off the roots of all actions.

10. Returning to Kailāsa after marrying Pārvatī, Śiva attained added lustre. He thought over the task of the gods and the pain of the people involved in the fulfilment of that task.

11. When Śiva returned to Kailāsa, the joyful Gaṇas made all arrangements for His happiness.

12. When Śiva returned to Kailāsa, there was great jubilation there. The gods returned to their realms with their minds full of joy.

13. Then taking Pārvatī, the daughter of the mountain, with Him, Śiva, the great Lord, went to a delightful brilliant isolated place.

14-15. Making a wonderful bed conducive to good sexual pleasure, rendered smooth and fragrant with flowers and sandal paste and auspiciously supplemented with objects of enjoyment, lord 'Śiva' the bestower of honour, indulged in dalliance with Pārvatī for a thousand years of god.[127]

16. In that divine sport at the mere contact with

126. Guha, better known as Kārttikeya was the son of Śiva. Born in a thicket in a forest, out of the semen of Śiva, without the intervention of Pārvatī he was fostered by the Pleiades (Kṛttikās) whence he received the title Kā ttikeya. When grown into youth, he became the Commander-in-Chief (senāpati) of the army of Śiva, fought and slew the Daitya Tāraka. As he killed (māra) the evil (ku) Asura, he became known as kumāra.

127. For different calculations of the time-durations see Sk. P. Ch. 142-145.

Pārvatī, Śiva lapsed in unconsciousness. She too lapsed into unconsciousness due to the contact with Śiva. She neither knew the day nor the night.

17. When Śiva following the worldly way began his enjoyment of pleasures, O sinless one, a great length of time passed by as though it was a mere moment in their awareness.

18. Then, O dear, Indra and the gods gathered together on the mountain Meru and began their mutual discussion.

The gods said:—

19. It is for the fulfilment of our task that Lord Śiva, the leader of Yogins, free from aberrations, the unsullied, revelling and resting in his own Self, has married.

20. No son is born to Him. We do not know the reason. How is it that the lord of gods is delaying the action?

Brahmā said:—

21. In the meantime, from Nārada who has the divine vision the gods came to know of the extent of the enjoyment of the couple engaged in dalliance.

22. Realising that their enjoyment had extended over a long time, the gods became worried. Making me Brahmā as their leader they approached Viṣṇu Nārāyaṇa[128].

23. After bowing to him I narrated to him all the details we desired to convey. The gods stood steady and silent like dolls painted in a picture.

24. For a thousand years according to the calculation of the gods, Śiva the Yogin has been engaged in sexual dalliance. He does not desist from it.

Lord Viṣṇu said:—

25. O creator of the universe, there is nothing to worry about. Everything will be well. O lord of gods, seek refuge in the great lord Śiva.

26. O lord of subjects, the people who dedicate their

128. The epithet 'Nārāyaṇa' is applied to Viṣṇu because the waters (nāra) were his first place of motion (ayana). In Hindu Mythology Viṣṇu is represented as lying on the serpent couch in the midst of ocean.

minds to and seek refuge in Him joyously and devoutly have nothing to fear from any quarter.

27. The interruption to amorous dalliance will take place at the proper time, not now, O Brahmā. Any task carried out at the proper time shall be crowned with success, not otherwise.

28. If the enjoyment is desired by Śiva who can check it? When another thousand years are completed He will desist from it, out of his own will.

29. If any one separates the copulated pair by a tricky expedient, he will have the pangs of separation from his wife and sons in every birth.

30. He will fall from perfect wisdom. His glory will be destroyed. He will lose his fortune. That sinner after his death will suffer the tortures of the hell Kālasūtra[129] for a hundred thousand years.

31. The sage Durvāsas[130] separated Indra in copulation with Rambhā[131] and the sage got separation from his wife as a result thereof.

32. He took another woman as his wife and thus put an end to the pangs of separation lasting for a thousand years of the gods.

33. Bṛhaspati hindered Kāma in copulation with Ghṛtācī[132] but within six months the moon abducted his wife.

34. He then propitiated Śiva, fought a battle over Tārā, enjoyed her even as she was pregnant and tried to dispel his pangs of separation.

35. The sage Gautama forced the moon in the company of Rohiṇī to desist from sexual dalliance and he suffered the pangs of separation from his wife.

36-37. Hariścandra expelled a ploughman in copulation with a Śūdra woman, to wander in a lonely forest. Listen

129. Kālasūtra is one of several hells wherein the wicked are tortured. For details see Viṣṇu Purāṇa II. 214

130. Durvāsas, the son of Atri and Anasūyā was a sage of irascible temper.

131. Rambhā, a celestial damsel is represented as the type of female beauty. She was one of the rarities produced at the churning of the ocean.

132. Ghṛtācī, a celestial damsel, was known for her rare beauty and charms.

to the effect thereof. He lost his wife, son and kingdom. He was tarmented by Viśvāmitra. It was only after propitiating Śiva that he could get released from that sin.

38. Though Ajāmila,[133] a noble brahmin, was in copulation with a Śūdra woman, gods did not interfere due to this fear.

39. Everything can be achieved through the discharge of the semen. O Brahmā, the process of discharge is very effective. The discharge that is fruitful none can withhold.

40-41. O gods, Śiva's act of enjoyment will extend to a thousand years of celestial calculation. After that period is over, you can go there and do such things as will necessitate the fall of the semen on the ground. The son of the lord named Skanda will be born of that.

42. O Brahmā, return to your abode along with the gods. Let Śiva carry on enjoyment in the isolated place in the company of Pārvatī.

Brahmā said :—

43. After saying this, the lord of Lakṣmī immediately returned to his harem. O great sage, the gods too returned to their abodes along with me.

44. On account of the dalliance of Śiva and Pārvatī, the earth quaked with the weight along with Śeṣa (the serpent) and Kacchapa[134] (the tortoise).

45. By the weight of Kacchapa, the cosmic air, the support of everything, was stunned and the three worlds became terrified and agitated.

46. Then the gods along with me sought refuge in Viṣṇu and in our depression intimated to him the news.

The gods said :—

47. O Viṣṇu, the lord of the gods, O lord and protector of all, save us who have sought refuge in you and whose minds are acutely terrified.

48. The vital air of the three worlds is stunned. We do not know wherefore. The three worlds including the

133. Ajāmila was a Brāhmaṇa of Kanauj who married a Śūdra woman and had children of whom he was very fond.

134. Śeṣa (the serpent chief) and Kacchapa (the tortoise) are said to support the earth in turns on the hoods and the back respectively.

mobile and immobile as well as the gods and the sages are excited.

Brahmā said: —

49. After saying this, O great sage, all the depressed gods, stood silent along with me in front of Viṣṇu with great misery.

50. On hearing those words, Viṣṇu took us all immediately to the mountain Kailāsa, the favourite haunt of Śiva.

51. After going there in the company of the gods and me, the favourite deity of the gods went to the excellent resort of Śiva with a desire to see Śiva.

52. Unable to see Him there, Viṣṇu and the gods became surprised. With humility he asked the Gaṇas of Śiva who were there.

Viṣṇu said:—

53. O Gaṇas of Śiva, where has Śiva, the lord of all gone ? Sympathetically intimate this to us who are depressed.

Brahmā said:—

54. On hearing these words of Viṣṇu in the company of the gods, the Gaṇas of Śiva lovingly replied to Viṣṇu.

The Gaṇas of Śiva said:—

55. O Viṣṇu, please listen along with Brahmā and the gods, we shall tell you the truth and the details out of love for Śiva.

56. Śiva, the lord of all, had gone into the apartment of Pārvatī after stationing us here with love. He is an expert in indulging in divine sports.

57. O lord of Lakṣmī, many years have gone by. We do not know what Śiva, the great lord, is doing within her apartment.

Brahmā said:—

58. On hearing their words, O excellent sage, Viṣṇu, the gods and I were perplexed and went to the doorway of Śiva's apartment.

59. After going there along with me and the gods, Viṣṇu, the favourite deity of the gods, spoke in dejection but with joy in the heart.

60. O excellent sage, standing there, along with me and the gods, he eulogised Śiva, the lord of all the worlds with great pleasure.

Viṣṇu said:—

61. O great lord, what are you doing there inside? Save us who are harassed by Tāraka and who have sought refuge in you.

62. O great sage, praising and pleading like this to Śiva, Viṣṇu wept bitterly along with the gods harassed by Tāraka.

63. O great sage, the tumultuous cry of the heaven-dwellers distressed by the demon got mingled with the sound of eulogy to Śiva.

CHAPTER TWO

(*The birth of Śiva's son*)

Brahmā said:—

1. On hearing that, the great lord, an expert in Yogic theory, though free from lust, did not emit the semen, fearing to offend Pārvatī.

2. He came to the door, near the gods distressed by the demon. Śiva is the benefactor favourably disposed to His devotees.

3. On seeing lord Śiva, favourably disposed to His devotees, the gods including me and Viṣṇu became extremely happy.

4. O sage, bowing down with stooping shoulders the gods along with me and Viṣṇu eulogised Śiva with great pleasure.

The gods said:—

5. "O great God, O lord of gods, O ocean of mercy,

O Śiva, you are the immanent soul of all. You know everything.

6. O lord, carry out the task of the gods. O great lord, save the gods. Slay Tāraka and other demons and take pity on us."

7. On hearing these words of the gods, lord Śiva agitated in soul and dispirited in the mind, replied.

Śiva said:—

8. "O Viṣṇu, O Brahmā, O gods, you are the goal of everybody's mind. What should happen necessarily must happen. There is none to stop it.

9-11. What has happened has already happened. Now O gods, listen to what is relevant to the context. Let him who will, take up this discharged semen". After saying this He let it fall on the ground. Urged by the gods Agni became a dove and swallowed it with his beak. O sage, in the meantime Pārvatī came there.

12. When Śiva took a long time to return, she hastened there and saw the gods. On coming to know of the incident she became very furious.

13. She told Viṣṇu and the gods as follows.

The goddess said :—

14. Hi Hi, O gods, you are wicked and particularly selfish and for that purpose you give pain to others.

15. O gods, for the sake of realising your self-interests you all propitiated the lord and spoilt my dalliance. I have become a barren woman therefore.

16. O gods, after offending me none can be happy. Hence O wicked heaven-dwellers, you will remain unhappy.

Brahmā said :—

17. After saying these words Pārvatī, the daughter of the king of mountains, blazing with fury cursed Viṣṇu and all other gods.

Pārvatī said :—

18. From now onwards let the wives of the gods be utterly barren and let the gods who offended me be unhappy.

Brahmā said :—

19. Cursing Viṣṇu and other gods, Pārvatī furiously told Agni who had swallowed Śiva's semen.

Pārvatī said :—

20. O Agni, be the devourer of everything and let your soul be afflicted. You are a fool. You do not know Śiva's fundamental principles. You have come forward to carry out the task of the gods.

21. It is neither proper nor beneficent to you to have eaten up Śiva's semen. You are a rogue, a wretched vile, paying heed to the wicked counsel of the wicked.

Brahmā said :

22. After cursing the fire thus, O sage, Pārvatī, the daughter of the mountain, immediately returned to her apartment along with Śiva, dissatisfied that she was.

23. O great sage, after returning she persistently pleaded with Śiva and bore a son named Gaṇeśa.

24. O sage, the details of that story I shall narrate to you later on. Now listen to the story of the birth of Guha which I am going to narrate.

25. The gods are wont to partake of the offerings of food etc. consigned to the fire in accordance with the Vedic text. Hence the gods became pregnant.

26. Unable to endure the force of the semen they became afflicted. Viṣṇu and other gods had already lost their sense at the curse of Pārvatī.

27. Then Viṣṇu and other gods were overwhelmed and scorched. In this state they sought refuge in Śiva.

28. After reaching the threshold of Śivā's apartment, the gods humbly eulogised Pārvatī and Śiva with pleasure and with palms joined in reverence.

The gods said :—

29. O lord of gods, O great lord, consort of Pārvatī, what has happened now? Your magical power is incapable of being transgressed.

30. We have become pregnant and also scorched by

your semen. O Śiva, take pity on us. Remove our miserable plight.

Brahmā said:—

31. O sage, on hearing the eulogy of the gods, Śiva, the lord of Pārvatī came immediately to the threshold where the gods stood waiting.

32. The gods including Viṣṇu bowed humbly with great devotion and eulogised Śiva who is favourably disposed to His devotees, who came near the entrance.

The gods said :—

33. O Śiva, O great lord, we bow to you particularly, save us seeking refuge in you on being scorched by your semen.

34. O Śiva, please remove our misery. We will certainly die otherwise. Save you, none can remove the misery of the gods.

Brahmā said :—

35. On hearing these piteous words, the lord of the gods laughingly replied to the gods with his usual sympathy towards his devotees.

Śiva said :—

36. O Viṣṇu, O Brahmā, O gods, all of you listen to my words with attention. You will be happy. Be careful.

37. At my behest you shall vomit this semen virile of mine. You will be happy thereby.

Brahmā said :—

38. Accepting this command with bent head Viṣṇu and the other gods immediately vomitted it out after duly remembering Śiva the imperishable.

39. The semen of Śiva lustrous and golden in colour falling on the ground seemed to touch the heaven as it was as huge as a mountain.

40. Viṣṇu and other gods became relieved and they eulogised the great lord Śiva who is favourably disposed to His devotees.

41. O great sage, only Agni did not become happy. Śiva, the great lord, gave a separate hint to him.

42. Then the distressed fire, O sage, eulogised Śiva with palms joined in reverence and piteously spoke these words.

Agni said:—

43-44. O lord of gods, I am a stupid and deluded servant of yours. Forgive me my fault. Please remove my burning sensation. O lord, you are the benefactor and sympathetic to the distressed.

Brahmā said:—

45. On hearing the words of Agni, Śiva the great lord spoke delightedly to Agni He is favourably disposed to His devotees.

Śiva said:—

46. An improper action has been committed by you in swallowing my semen. Hence your sin has become formidable at my bidding and the burning sensation has not been cured.

47. Now that you have sought refuge in me you are sure to be happy. I am pleased with you. All your misery will be dissolved.

48. Deposit carefully that semen in the womb of some good woman. You will become happy and particularly relieved of the burning sensation.

Brahmā said:—

49. On hearing these words of Śiva, Agni replied to Śiva, the benefactor of the devotees with pleasure and bowing down with palms joined in reverence.

50. "O lord Śiva, this splendour of yours is inaccessible and unbearable. There is no woman in the three worlds except Pārvatī to hold it in her womb."

51. O excellent sage, when fire said like this, you, urged by Śiva, said thus in order to help Agni.

Nārada said:—

52. "O Agni, listen to my words that will dispel your

burning sensation. It will yield great pleasure and ward off your pains.

53. O Agni, taking recourse to the following expedient you will be relieved of the burning sensation and be happy. O dear, this has been explained by me well at the will of Śiva.

54. O Agni, you shall deposit this semen of Śiva in the bodies of the ladies who take their morning baths in the month of Māgha."

Brahmā said :—

55. O sage, meanwhile the wives of the seven celestial sages came there desirous of taking their early morning bath in the month of Māgha with other observances of rites.

56. After the bath, six of them were distressed by the chillness and were desirous of going near the flame of fire.

57. Arundhatī of good conduct and perfect knowledge saw them deluded and dissuaded them at the behest of Śiva.

58. O sage, the six ladies stubbornly insisted on going there to ward off their chillness because they were deluded by Śiva's magical art.

59. Immediately the particles of the semen entered their bodies through the pores of hairs, O sage. The fire was relieved of their burning sensation.

60. Vanishing immediately from the scene, Agni in the form of a flame, went back happily to his region, mentally remembering you and Śiva.

61. O saintly one, the women became pregnant and were distressed by the burning sensation. They went home. O dear, Arundhatī was displeased with fire.

62. O dear, the husbands on seeing the plight of their wives became furious. They consulted one another and discarded them.

63. O dear, on seeing their own state the six ladies felt very miserable and distressed.

64. The wives of the sages cast off their semen in the form of a foetus at the top of Himavat. They felt then relieved of their burning sensation.

65. Unable to bear that semen of Śiva and trembling much, Himavat became scorched by it and hurled it in the Gaṅgā.

66. O great sage, the intolerable semen of lord Śiva was deposited by Gaṅgā in the forest of Śara grass by means of its waves.

67. The semen that fell was turned in a handsome good-featured boy, full of glory and splendour. He increased everyone's pleasure.

68. O great sage, on the sixth day of the bright half of the lunar month of Mārgaśirṣa, the son of Śiva was born in the world.

69. At that time, O Brahmin, on their mountain, Pārvatī the daughter of Himavat and Śiva became very happy.

70. Out of joy, milk exuded from the breasts of Pārvatī. On reaching the spot everyone felt very happy.

71. O dear, there was auspiciousness in the three worlds, pleasing to the good. There occurred obstacles to the wicked and particularly to the demons.

72. O Nārada, there was a mysterious sound of Dundubhi drum in the sky. Showers of flowers fell on the boy.

73. O excellent sage, there was great delight to Viṣṇu and the gods. There was great jubilation everywhere.

CHAPTER THREE

(*The boyhood sports of Kārttikeya*)

Nārada said :—

1. O lord of subjects, O Brahmin, O creator, what happened thereafter ? Please tell me the same.

Brahmā said :—

2. O dear, then the powerful sage Viśvāmitra, urged by Brahmā, came there casually and was delighted.

3. On seeing the unearthly splendour of that brilliant boy, he became very delighted. He bowed to the boy.

4. With a delighted mind he eulogised him with the words prompted by Brahmā. Viśvāmitra realised his power.

5. The boy too was delighted and became the source of

great enjoyment. Laughingly he spoke to Viśvāmitra. It was very surprising.

Śiva's son said :—

6. "O great one of perfect wisdom, it is due to the will of Śiva that you have come here by chance. O dear, perform my purificatory rites in accordance with Vedic injunctions.

7. From now onwards you remain my priest conferring your love on me. It is certain that you will become the object of worship of all."

Brahmā said:—

8. On hearing his words, Gādhi's son[135] (Viśvāmitra) was highly delighted and surprised. He spoke to him in a tone, by no means highly accented.

Viśvāmitra said:—

9. Listen, O dear, I am not a brahmin. I am a Kṣatriya, son of Gādhi, famous as Viśvāmitra and a servant of brahmins.

10. O excellent boy, I have thus narrated my life to you. Who are you ? Now mention everything about your life to me who am surprised.

Brahmā said :—

11. On hearing his words the boy told him about his life. The divine boy, the cause of great enjoyment and protection, said to Gādhi's son with great pleasure.

Śiva's son said:—

12. O Viśvāmitra, thanks to my favour, you now become a brahminical sage. Vasiṣṭha and others will for ever regard you with respect.

13. Hence, at my behest you shall perform my purificatory rites. Keep this as a great secret. You shall not mention it anywhere.

135. Viśvāmitra, the son of Gādhi or Gāthin, was a born Kṣatriya who by intense austerities attained Brāhmaṇahood. ŚP. attributes this change to the favour of Kumāra who raised him to Brāhmaṇahood in order to enable him to perform his purificatory rites.

Brahmā said :—

14. O celestial sage, in the manner laid down in the Vedas he performed the purificatory rites for the son of Śiva.

15. Śiva's son, the cause of great enjoyment and protection, was glad and conferred divine wisdom on the sage.

16. The son of Agni made Viśvāmitra his priest. Form that time onwards he became a great brahmin and an expert in divine sports of various sorts.

17. O sage, the very first sport that he performed thus has been narrated to you by me. O dear, listen to another sport of his with wonder. I shall narrate it to you.

18-19. At that time he was known as white in colour. Agni went there and seeing his son who was divine and very holy called him "O dear son." Agni embraced and kissed him too. He gave him a miraculous weapon, spear.

20 Guha took the spear and ascended the peak. He hit the peak with his spear and the peak fell down.

21. Ten thousand billions of heroic demons came there to attack him but were killed on being hit with the spear.

22. There was great hue and cry. The Earth, the mountains and the three worlds quaked. Indra the lord of gods came there.

23. With his thunderbolt he hit on his right side. A person named "Śākha"[136] of great strength came out of that side.

24. Śakra struck him again with his thunderbolt on his left side. Another strong person named Viśākha came out of that side.

25. Then Indra struck his heart with his thunderbolt. Another person very powerful like him named Naigama came out.

136 Śākha, Viśākha and Naigama are the three brothers of Kumāra. According to ŚP. they are his very self. SP. RS. iv. 23-25.

V.S Agrawal gives quite a different interpretation. According to him Kumāra is the symbol of the life-principle manifesting in every individual. Kṛttikās are the six yogic *cakras* located in the human body in the golden reed. Kumāra who is born in this six-jointed single reed is called (i) Kārttikeya and (ii) Śākha. The life-principle then branches out in the form of five gross elements and the mind which together are called (iii) Viśākha. As the popular God of the merchant community Kumāra is called (iv) Naigama or Naigameya.

26. Then the four of great heroic strength including Skanda rushed to attack Indra. I offered my protection to Indra.

27. Afraid of Guha, Indra with all the gods went away to his region agitatedly. O sage, he did not know his secret.

28. That boy remained there itself as fearless as before. O dear, he was highly pleased and continued his divine sports of various sorts.

29. Meanwhile the six ladies named Kṛttikās came there for bath and they saw the lordly boy.

30. All of them desired to take and fondle him O sage, as a result of their simultaneous desire for taking and fondling the boy, a dispute arose.

31. In order to quell their mutual dispute, the boy assumed six faces and drank milk off their breasts. O sage, they were all satisfied.

32-33. Realising his desire, the Kṛttikās, O sage, took him to their region joyously. Feeding him with their breast milk they nursed and nurtured Śiva's son who was more refulgent than the sun.

34. They never let him go out of their sight. He became the object of their love, dearer to them than their own lives. Verily he who nurses and nurtures the child has the right of possession over the son.[137]

35. With great love they gave him the rarest garments and excellent ornaments in the three worlds.

36. Feeding him specially on the choicest delicacies day by day they brought up the boy prodigy.

37. O dear, once that son of the Krttikās went to the celestial assembly and showed wonderful feats.

38. The boy of wonderful miracles showed his rare splendour to the gods including Viṣṇu.

39-40. On seeing him, the gods and sages including Viṣṇu became surprised and asked the boy "Pray, who are you ?" On hearing it he did not say anything in reply. He returned to his abode and remained concealed as before.

137. Verses 34-36 of this chapter are the same as verses 31-32 of the following chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

(Search for Kārttikeya and his conversation with Nandin)

Nārada said :—

1. O lord of people, O Brahmā, O lord of gods, what happened after that ? Narrate it to me kindly besides the description of Śiva's sports.

Brahmā said :—

2. O sage, after the son of Śiva had been taken over by the Kṛttikās some time elapsed but the daughter of Himavat had no knowledge of the same.

3. Meanwhile Pārvatī beaming with her lotus like face told her husband Śiva, the lord of the gods.

Pārvatī said :—

4. O lord of the gods, listen to my auspicious words. O lord, you have been attained by me, thanks to my previous merits.

5. Although you are the most excellent among the Yogins, O lord, you became desirous of dalliance. But my dalliance with you was interrupted in the middle by the gods.

6. O lord, your semen fell on the ground and not in my womb. Where did it go ? Among the gods by whom could it have been concealed ?

7. O lord, infallible is your semen, how can it be fruitless ? Or has it developed into a child somewhere ?

Brahmā said:—

8. O great sage, on hearing the words of Pārvatī, the lord of the universe called the gods and the sages and laughingly said to them.

Lord Śiva said :—

9. O gods, listen to my words. Has Pārvatī's statement been heard by you ? Where has my unfailing semen gone ? By whom has it been concealed ?

10. If he, out of fear, falls at my feet quickly he may not be punished. If a king, competent enough, does

not rule firmly he will be harrassed by the subjects. He cannot be a protector.

Brahmā said :—

11. On hearing the words of Śiva and after consulting one another they replied one by one. They were so afraid of the great lord.

Viṣṇu said:—

12. Let those who have concealed your semen incur the sins of those who utter lies, of those who outrage the modesty of preceptor's wife, and of those who are engaged in insulting the preceptor always.

Brahmā said:—

13. Let him who has concealed your semen anywhere in the holy centres of Bhārata be debarred from the privilege of serving or worshipping you.

The guardians of the quarters said:—

14. Let him who has concealed your semen suffer continuously from the pang as a result of that sinful action.[138]

The gods said:—

15. Let him who has concealed your semen incur the sin of that stupid person who does not fulfil the promise he himself has made.

The wives of the gods said:—

16. Let her who has concealed your semen be deprived of mother and kinsmen and incur the sin of those base women who hate their husband and carry on an affair with another man.

Brahmā said :—

17. On hearing the words of the gods, Śiva the lord of the gods threatened Dharma and others the cosmic witnesses of all activities.

138. The original of this translation is defective.

Lord Śiva said :—

18. The infallible semen of mine, has not been concealed by the gods. By whom could it then have been concealed ?

19. All of you are the witnesses of all actions always. Has it been concealed by you ? Have you come to know of it ? Please narrate.

20. On hearing the words of Śiva they nervously looked at one another and spoke before the lord one by one.

Brahmā said: —

21. The infallible semen of Śiva, infuriated at the intervention in the course of his sexual dalliance, fell on the ground. This was observed by me.

The Earth said :—

22. I was unable to bear the terrible semen. Hence I dropped it into the fire. O lord, please forgive me.

The fire said :—

23. O Śiva, assuming the form of a dove I gulped the semen but could not bear the terrible thing. Hence I immediately dropped it on the mountain Kailāsa.

The mountain said:—

24. O lord of the worlds, I too was unable to bear the terrible thing. O lord, I dropped it in the Gaṅgā.

Gaṅgā said: —

25. O lord of the worlds, I too was unable to bear your terrible semen. O lord, completely exhausted, I dropped it in the grove of Śara plants.

Vāyu said:—

26. O Śiva, the semen that fell among the Śara plants immediately became a very beautiful boy on the holy banks of the celestial river.

The sun said:—

27. On seeing the crying boy, O lord, I went to the

western mountain, urged by the revolving wheel of time, being unable to stay there at night.

The moon said: —

28. Taking the crying boy, the Kṛttikās returned to their abode. O Śiva, they went to Badarikā hermitage.

The waters said: —

29. O lord, taking the crying child with them and feeding him with their own breast milk they nurtured your son, as refulgent as the sun.

The dusk said:—

30. Now, he is the nursling son of the Kṛttikās in the forest. In their eagerness they named him Kārttikeya lovingly.

The night said:—

31. They never let the boy go out of their sight. He is the object of their love, dearer to them than their own lives. Verily he who nurtures, possesses the son.

The day said:—

32. They fed him on the choicest delicacies. They gave him the rarest garments and excellent ornaments.

Brahmā said: —

33. On hearing their words, the destroyer of Pura[130] became glad. In his joy he gave monetary gifts to the brahmins.

34. On receiving the news of her son, Pārvatī was delighted. She distributed a crore of gems and much wealth among the brahmins.

35. Lakṣmī, Sarasvatī, Menā, Sāvitrī and all other women, Viṣṇu and all other gods gave much wealth to the brahmins.

36. Urged by the gods, sages and mountains, the lord

130. Śiva is called Purasūdana, Tripurāri or Purāri, "the slayer of Pura", for he destroyed Bāṇa who was called Tripurāsura because he had received in gift three cities from Śiva, Brahmā and Viṣṇu.

sent his Gaṇas as his emissaries to the place where his son was staying.

37-39. O Nārada, he sent Vīrabhadra, Viśālākṣa, Śaṅkukarna, Parākrama, Nandīśvara, Mahākāla, Vajradaṁṣṭra, Mahonmada, Gokarṇāsya, Dadhimukha who was comparable to the blazing flame of fire, a hundred thousand Kṣetrapālas, three hundred thousand Bhūtas, Rudras, Bhairavas, and innumerable others of the same exploit as that of Śiva and of hideous features.

40. All the emissaries of Śiva went and haughtily encircled the abode of the Kṛttikās with various miraculous weapons in their hands.

41. On seeing them the Kṛttikās were extremely terrified. They spoke to Kārttikeya blazing with divine splendour.

Kṛttikās said:—

42. Dear boy, innumerable soldiers have encircled the house. What shall be done? Where are we to go. A great danger has beset us.

Kārttikeya said:—

43. O good women, O mothers, cast off your fear. When I am here what fear need you have? Although I am a boy I am invincible. Who can thwart me?

Brahmā said: —

44. In the meantime, Nandīśvara the commander-in-chief sat in front of Kārttikeya and said.

Nandīśvara said:—

45. O brother, O mothers, listen to my auspicious mission. I have been commissioned by lord Śiva, the annihilator.

46. O dear, all the gods, Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Śiva and others are holding a jubilant conference at Kailāsa.

47. At that time Pārvatī addressed Śiva the benefactor of all, in that assembly urging a search for you.

48. Śiva asked the assembly severally about you in

order to get you back. They too replied in a suitable manner.

49. They said to Śiva that you were here in the abode of Kṛttikas. Dharma and others who are the cosmic witnesses of all righteous and unrighteous activities revealed your whereabouts.

50. Formerly Pārvatī and Śiva indulged in their secret sexual dalliance. The semen of Śiva seen by the gods fell on the ground.

51. The earth dropped it into the fire, the fire on the mountain, the mountain in the Gaṅgā and the Gaṅgā transmitted it to the grove of Śara plants by her following currents and waves.

52. There you developed into a boy, the lord with the mission of fulfilling the task of the gods. There you were picked up by the Kṛttikās. Now you shall come down to the Earth.

53. Śiva will be crowning you in the company of the gods. You will get miraculous weapons and will slay the demon Tāraka.

54. You are the son of the annihilator of the universe and these (Kṛttikas) are impatient to gain possession of you as the dry tree tries to conceal fire within its hollow though it is incapable of holding it.

55. You are brilliant enough to illuminate the universe. You do not fit in well in this abode just as a majestic elephant fallen in a deep well does not retain splendour.

56. You can shed splendour if your brilliance is not hidden just as the sun illuminates the world only when it is not hidden by the cloud.

57. In the matter of omnipresence in the universe you alone are Viṣṇu, O Śiva's son. The all-pervading sky is not pervaded by anything else.

58. A Yogin is not entangled in the activities of nurturing himself. The soul is not involved in the physical activities.

59. You are the creator of the universe, you are the lord. Your place is not among these. You are a mass of attributes and splendour as the soul of a Yogin.

60. O brother, those who do not know you are of

damned intellect. Although the toads and lotuses are in the same pond toads are not honoured.

Kārttikeya said:—

61. O brother, you know everything. You are perfectly wise possessing the knowledge of the past, present and future, since you are an attendant of Śiva. Hence no praise of yours is specially called for.

62. O brother, people get reconciled to whatever form of species of life they are born. Their own actions are responsible for their birth and they are satisfied.

63. The Kṛttikās are wise women of Yogic practice. They are the digits of Prakṛti. They have helped in nurturing me with their own breast milk.

64. I am their fostered son. They are my own part and parcel. I am born of Prakṛti and the semen of the lord of Prakṛti.

65. O Nandikeśvara, I am not severed from the daughter of the lord of mountains who is virtually my mother just as these ladies on the basis of virtuous rites.

66. You have been sent by Śiva. You are like a son unto Śiva. I am coming with you. I shall see the gods.

67. After saying so and hurriedly taking leave of the Kṛttikās, Kārttikeya started along with the attendants of Śiva.

CHAPTER FIVE

(*Kārttikeya is crowned*)

Brahmā said:—

1-2. In the meantime he saw an excellent, lustrous and wonderful chariot, made by Viśvakarman. It was a commodious with a hundred wheels. It was beautiful and had the quickness of the mind. It had been sent by Pārvatī and was surrounded by the excellent attendants of Śiva.

3. With an aching heart, Kārttikeya, born of the semen

of lord Śiva, the perfectly wise and endless being, got into it.

4. At the same time, the distressed grief-stricken Kṛttikās approached him with dishevelled hair and began to speak like mad women.

Kṛttikās said:—

5. O ocean of mercy, how is it that you ruthlessly leave us and go? This is not a virtuous thing for a fostered son to forsake his mothers.

6. You have been brought up by us affectionately. Hence you are our son in virtue of that. What shall we do? Where shall we go? What can we do?

7. After saying this and closely embracing Kārttikeya, the Kṛttikās fell into a swoon due to the imminent separation from their son.

8. Restoring them to consciousness and instructing them with spiritual utterances, O sage, he got into the chariot along with them and the Pārṣadas too.

9. Seeing and hearing various auspicious and pleasing things Kumāra went to the palace of his father along with the Pārṣadas.

10. Kumāra reached the foot of a Nyagrodha tree at Kailāsa in the fast chariot along with Nandin seated to his right.

11. There Kumāra, the son of Śiva, an expert in various divine sports, waited along with the Kṛttikās and the chief of Pārṣadas, in great delight.

12. Then all the gods, sages, Siddhas, Cāraṇas, Viṣṇu and Brahmā announced his arrival.

13. Then in order to see him Śiva, along with Viṣṇu, Brahmā, the gods, sages and others went there.

14. Many conches, Bherīs and Tūryas were sounded. There was great jubilation among the delighted gods.

15. Vīrabhadra and other Gaṇas followed them with different chiming cymbols beating the time and sporting about.

16. Eulogising and being eulogised they sang songs of praise.

17. Shouting cries of "Victory" and "Obeisance" the delighted people went to see the excellent son of Śiva born in the grove of Śara plants.[140]

18. Pārvatī caused the entire outskirts of the city fully decorated with Padmarāga and other gems. The main highway was rendered beautiful and auspicious.

19. The thirty goddesses Lakṣmī and others stood in front, along with chaste ladies whose husbands and sons were alive and Pārvatī stood ahead of them.

20. At the bidding of Pārvatī, the smiling celestial damsels, Rambhā and others, dressed gorgeously, were engaged in singing and dancing.

21. Those who looked at Kumāra resembling Śiva saw a great halo pervading the three worlds.

22. Immediately they saluted Kumāra who was enveloped by the brilliant halo, the lustre of molten gold and the refulgence of the sun.

23. With shoulders stooping down and eagerly engaged in shouting the cry of "Obeisance" they flanked him to the right and left and stood by.

24. Viṣṇu, Indra and I as well as the gods prostrated on the ground and went round Kumāra.

25. In the meantime Śiva, and Pārvatī highly delighted and jubilant came there and saw their son.

26. On seeing his son, the great lord Śiva, the sole kinsman of the universe along with the great goddess Pārvatī was filled with pleasure and love—the lord who wore snakes on his body and was surrounded by the Pramathas.

27. On seeing Pārvatī and Śiva, Kārttikeya got down from the chariot immediately and saluted them.

28. Embracing him with love, Śiva kissed Kumāra on the head. He, the cause of great affection, was highly delighted.

29. Embracing him in great excitement and melting with love, Pārvatī suckled him at her breasts.

140. Kumāra is said to be born of Śiva's semen that was first swallowed by the Fire assuming the form of a pigeon, then by the Kṛttikās, the six wives of the sages, then by Gaṅgā who deposited it in the reeds. Kumāra is thus called आग्नेय, कार्त्तिकेय, गांगेय and शरज ।

30. The Nīrājana rite was performed by the delighted gods in the company of their wives.

31. The sages adored Kumāra with the Vedic chants, the musicians by singing songs, and others by playing upon musical instruments.

32. Placing Kumāra shining with brilliant lustre on his lap Pārvatī shone with glory as the greatest among women who carried sons.

33. At the bidding of Śiva, Kumāra in the company of his Gaṇas came to Śiva's abode. He felt very happy in the company of jubilant gods.

34. The couple shone simultaneously being saluted by the sages and surrounded by the important gods.

35. Kumāra delightedly played about in the lap of Śiva. He teased Vāsuki[141] round Śiva's neck with his hands.

36. Seeing that sportive act with his merciful vision, lord Śiva spoke about it to Pārvatī laughingly.

37. Seeing the gentle smile of Kumāra, lord Śiva and Pārvatī attained great joy. The lord, the sole ruler of the worlds and kinsman of the universe uttered nothing with his throat choked through affection.

38. Then Śiva, the lord of the universe, following the worldly convention delightedly placed Kārttikeya on a beautiful gemset throne.

39. With hundreds of gemset pots filled with the waters of holy centres sanctified by Vedic mantras he performed his ceremonial ablution joyously.

40. Viṣṇu gave him a crown, a coronet and bracelets moulded and set in gems, his own necklace Vaijayanti and the discus.

41. Śiva gave him the trident, the bow Pināka, the axe, the arrow Pāśupata, the weapon of destruction and the greatest lore.

42. I gave him the holy thread, the Vedas, the mantra Gāyatrī, the vessel Kamaṇḍalu, the arrow Brahmāstra and the lore that destroys the enemy.

43. Then Indra gave him a lordly elephant and a

141. Vāsuki, the King of the Nāgas, is said to adorn Śiva's neck.

thunderbolt. The lord of the waters, Varuṇa, gave him a white umbrella and a necklace of gems to wear.

44. The sun gave him a chariot as fast as the mind and a coat of mail with great equipments; Yama his own staff; the moon a vessel full of nectar.

45. Agni lovingly gave him a spear; Nirṛti his own weapon and the wind his own weapon.

46. Kubera gave him a mace; Śiva a spear; the gods different kinds of weapons and implements.

47. The delighted lord of Kāma gave him the weapon of love, a club and his own lore with great pleasure.

48. The ocean of milk gave him valuable gems and a splendid anklet set with gems. Himavat gave him divine ornaments and garments.

49. Garuḍa gave him his own son Citrabarhaṇa; Aruṇa a powerful cock Tāmracūḍa.

50. Pārvatī gave him power and prosperity smilingly and joyously. She gave him longevity too with great pleasure.

51. Lakṣmī gave him divine wealth and a great and beautiful necklace. Sāvitrī gave him the entire Siddhavidyā[142] with joy.

52. O sage, the other goddesses too who had come there gave him their respective presents. The Kṛttikās too did the same.

53. O excellent sage, there was great jubilation there. Everyone was delighted, especially Pārvatī and Śiva.

54. In the meantime, O sage, the powerful Śiva, spoke to Brahmā and to other gods laughingly and joyously.

Śiva said:—

55. "O Viṣṇu, O Brahmā, O gods, you listen to my words. I am delighted in all respects. Please choose the boons you wish."

Brahmā said:—

56. O sage, on hearing those words of Śiva, Viṣṇu

142. Siddhavidyā is the supreme knowledge of Yogic attainment that renders a person spiritually efficacious.

and other gods spoke to Śiva with faces beaming with pleasure.

The gods said:—

57. "O lord, Tāraka will certainly be killed by Kumāra. It is for that purpose that he is born.

58. Hence in our effort to kill him we shall start this very day. Please give your directions to Kumāra. Let him slay Tāraka for our happiness.

59. Thinking that it shall be so, lord Śiva entrusted his son to the gods in order to kill Tāraka, urged by his mercy that he was.

60. At the bidding of Śiva, Brahmā, Viṣṇu and other gods jointly started from the mountain keeping Kumāra in front.

61. After coming out of Kailāsa, at the behest of Viṣṇu, Tvaṣṭṛ built a wonderfully fine city very near the mountain.

62. There he built a divine, exquisite and wonderfully brilliant house for Kumāra. Tvaṣṭṛ set up an excellent throne there.

63. The intelligent Viṣṇu performed the auspicious ceremony of crowning Kārttikeya in the company of the gods by means of waters from all holy centres.

64. He bedecked Kārttikeya in every manner and dressed him gorgeously. He went through the ceremony in brief and made everyone celebrate the event with pleasure.

65. Viṣṇu joyously gave him the suzerainty of the universe. He applied the Tilaka mark and worshipped him along with the gods.

66. Bowing to Karttikeya with pleasure along with the gods and sages he eulogised the eternal form of Śiva with various hymns.

67. Karttikeya seated in the excellent throne and assuming the lordship and protectorate of the universe shone extremely well.

CHAPTER SIX

(*The miraculous feat of Kārttikeya*)

Brahmā said:—

1. There Kumāra showed a miraculous feat. O Nārada, listen to it that bestows devotion.

2. Then a certain brahmin Nārada came there, seeking refuge in Kumāra. He was glorious and had been performing a sacrifice.

3. Approaching Kumāra, bowing to and eulogising him with auspicious hymns the delighted brahmin related his tale.

The brahmin said:—

4. O lord, listen to my words. Relieve my distress. You are the lord of the universe. I seek refuge in you.

5. I began a goat sacrifice. The goat got loosened and strayed away from my house.

6. I do not know where it has gone. I have searched for it here and there but have not found it. Hence this will cause a serious default in my sacrifice.

7. While you are the lord, how can there be an obstacle to my sacrifice? O lord, after pondering over this matter please fulfil my task.

8. O lord, O son of Śiva, who else can I approach except you, who are worthy of being resorted to, who are the lord of the entire universe and are served by all the gods.

9-10. You are the kinsman of the distressed. You are worthy of being served well. You are favourably disposed to your devotees. You are the great lord eulogised by Viṣṇu, Brahmā and other gods. You are Skanda the delighter of Pārvatī, the sole destroyer of enemies, the great soul, the lord who bestows his own self upon the good seeking refuge in him.

11. O lord of the distressed, O great lord, O son of Śiva, O lord of the three worlds, O master of magical art, I have to seek refuge in you. O favourite of the brahmins, save me. You are the lord of all. You are eulogised by

Brahmā and other gods who bow to you. You have assumed forms through magical art. You are the bestower of happiness to your devotees. You are eager to protect. You wield power of deluding others.

12. You love devotees as your own vital air. You are the receptacle of all attributes. You are beyond three attributes. You are the beloved of Śiva. You are Śiva Himself. You confer welfare. You are the bestower of happiness with delight. You are the great Existent and cosmic consciousness. You are the son of Śiva, the omniscient who destroyed the three cities of Asuras. You are always subservient to great and pious love. You have six faces. You love the saintly persons who kneel to you. You are the lord of all people and their benefactor. You destroy those, who harass the good. You are the preceptor of even Śiva. You are the lord of the entire universe. Your feet are served by all the gods. O lover of service, save me.

13. O Skanda, terrible to the enemies, the benefactor of the devotees, I bow to your lotus-like feet. You are the refuge of people and source of their happiness. Please hear my submission through your ears. Please instil into the heart of everyone the feelings of devotion to you.

14. If you are the protector with efficient honour what harm can an opponent do even if he be strong and efficient and protected on either side? What harm can even Takṣaka[143] or even a carnivorous animal do unto him.

15. Even the preceptor of the gods cannot eulogise you adequately. Then tell me, how can I a foolish and wretched creature? O Skanda, pure or impure, noble or ignoble, of whatever nature I be, I pray unto the dust of your lotus-like feet.

16. O lord of all, ocean of mercy, favourably disposed to devotees, I am your own servant. May even a hundred sins of your own servant or a leader of the Gaṇas be forgiven. O lord, you know even the slightest act of devotion done anywhere. You are the destroyer of the distress of your servants. O lord, there is no other protector save you and no other wretched vulgar person than I.

143. Takṣaka, the son of Kadru, is a venomous serpent chief.

17. O lord, you are the cause of welfare, the destroyer of the sins of Kali age and a friend of Kubera. Your heart melts with pity. You have twelve eyes and you shine with six faces. Please make my sacrifice complete and perfect.

18. You are the protector of the three worlds, favourite of those who seek refuge in you. You are the performer and sustainer of sacrifices. You remove those who bring in obstacles.

19. O warder of obstacles, the cause of the creation of the good in every respect, O son of Iśāna, please make my sacrifices complete. Obeisance be to you,

20. O Skanda, you are the protector of all, the knower of all and the lord of all and Iśāna. By your penetration you protect all.

21. You alone are the knower of music, the great lord and knower of the Vedas. You are all-in-all, the creator, the lord of the gods and the goal of the good.

22. You are the joy of Pārvatī, the son of Śiva. You are the perfect wisdom, the self-ruler, the meditator and the object of meditation. You are the father of the fathers and the source of origin of good souls.

Brahmā said :—

23. On hearing his words, Śiva's son, the emperor of the gods, sent his attendant Vīrabāhu on that mission.

24. At his bidding, the great hero Vīrabāhu who bowed to his master with devotion started in search of it.

25. He searched throughout the universe but nowhere did he find the goat (although) he heard about the havoc done by it.

26. Then he went to Vaikuṇṭha where he saw the powerful goat working havoc with the sacrificial stake tied to its neck.

27. The hero dragged it catching hold of its horns and brought it quickly before his lord even as it was bleating loudly.

28. On seeing it, lord Kārttikeya who could carry the weighty universe, and the worker of great miracles, quickly rode on it.

29. Within a Muhūrta, O sage, the goat walked round the universe and without exhaustion returned to the same place.

30. Then the lord got down and resumed his seat. The goat stood there itself. Then the brahmin Nārada told the lord.

Nārada said :—

31. Obeisance to you, O lord of gods, O storehouse of mercy, give the goat to me. Let me perform the sacrifice with pleasure. Please assist me as my friend.

Kārttikeya said:—

32. O brahmin Nārada, this goat does not deserve to be killed. Return home. May your sacrifice be complete. It has been so ordained by my favour.

Brahmā said :—

33. On hearing the words of the lord, the brahmin was delighted. He returned home after bestowing his excellent blessings.

CHAPTER SEVEN

(*Commencement of the War*)

Brahmā said :—

1. On seeing that miraculous feat of Kumāra, Viṣṇu and other gods became delighted. They were convinced of his prowess.

2 Keeping Kumāra at the head, shouting and roaring, purified by Śiva's splendour they started to attack Tāraka.

3. When he heard about the preparation of the gods, the powerful Tāraka rushed to fight back the gods with a great army.

4. On seeing the great army of Tāraka approaching, the gods were surprised but roared like lions.

5. Then a celestial voice, prompted by Śiva addressed Viṣṇu and all other gods.

The celestial Voice said ;—

6. O gods, keeping Kumāra at the head you have entered the lists. Defeating the Asuras in the battle, you will be victorious.

Brahmā said :—

7. On hearing the celestial voice, the gods became enthusiastic. Fearlessly they roared like heroes.

8. With their fear subsided, and keeping Kumāra ahead, the gods went to the confluence of the river Mahī and the ocean[144] desirous of fighting.

9. Immediately Tāraka, along with a great army, came to the place where the gods stood and was surrounded by them in a body.

10. Battle drums were sounded as loud as the rumbling sound of the clouds at the dissolution of the world. The harsh musical instruments were also played when he came.

11. The Asuras in the company of Tāraka roared and shook the ground with their thudding footsteps, leapings and bouncings.

12. Undaunted by that terrible noise, the gods simultaneously rose up to fight Tāraka.

13. Accompanied by the great army of the gods and the guardians of the quarters, lord Indra seated Kumāra on an elephant and rushed forward.

14. Great wardrums, Dundubhis, Bherīs and Tūryas, lutes, flutes and Mṛdaṅgas were sounded and the Gandharvas sang war songs.

15. Leaving the elephant to lord Indra, Kumāra got in an aerial chariot of wonderful build and studded with different sets of gems.

16. Seated in the aerial chariot, the son of Śiva

144. The scene of the battle between the gods and Asuras is placed in the Western India on the coast of the Arabian sea where the sacred river Mahī that issues from Sahyapāda hill falls into it For details see Dr. Avasthi: Studies in Skandapurāṇa, pp. 128, 140, 160, 168.

endowed with good qualities and of great renown shone with great splendour. He was being fanned with lustrous chowries.

17. The lustrous umbrella presented by Varuṇa, shining with various gems was held aloft over his head. Beams of light as though of infinite moons shed great lustre around.

18. Indra and other gods of great strength, desirous of fighting, joined him with their own divisions of the army.

19. The gods and the demons stood in their arrays on the ground with a vast army ready to start the battle.

20. With the bards singing their songs of praise, the armies of the gods and the Asuras shone in their eagerness to pounce on and crush each other.

21. The two armies as vast as a wild jungle roared. They were terrific to the coward and pleasing to the brave.

22. In the meantime the rank and file of the Asuras and the gods, haughty of their strength and blazing with fury came together in a mutual clash.

23. A terrific tumultuous fight between the gods and the Asuras ensued. Within a moment the place was littered with severed heads and headless trunks.

24. Wounded and killed by great weapons, hundreds and thousands of heroic soldiers fell on the ground.

25. The arms of some were cut off by terrible blows from swords. Others lost their thighs in the battle of those honourable, heroic people.

26. The entire body of some was smashed by the maces; the chests and hearts of some were pounded by iron clubs; some were felled to the ground by spears and dragged with nooses.

27. The backs of some were torn with javelins and goads. Several heads chopped off by double-edged swords fell on the ground.

28. Hundreds of headless, limbless trunks were seen dancing and bouncing with arrows sticking to their hands.

29. Blood flowed like streams in hundreds of places. Hundreds of ghosts and goblins flocked there.

30. Jackals and vixens began eating the flesh. Numbers

of vultures, kites, crows and carnivorous birds devoured the flesh of those falling down.

31. In the meantime Tāraka, the demon of great strength, came there with a huge army to fight with the gods.

32. On seeing the haughty warrior rushing on them, Indra and others, turned against him. Then a tumultuous sound arose from both the armies.

33. Duels were fought by the gods and the Asuras crushing each other, on seeing which heroes were delighted and cowards were terrified.

34. The Asura Tāraka of great strength fought with Indra, Saṁhrāda with Agni and Yama with Jambha.

35. Lord Varuṇa fought with Nairṛta and Bala. Suvīra, the king of Guhyas, fought with Vāyu.

36. Śambhu fought with Iśāna. Śumbha an expert in battle fought with Śeṣa. Kumbha the Asura fought with the Moon.

37. Kuñjara of great strength and exploit, an expert in different kinds of battles, fought with Mihira, using great weapons.

38. Thus the gods and the Asuras, fought duels using their full strength with resolution.

39. O sage, desiring to gain the upper hand and vying with each other, the powerful gods and the Asuras were equally invincible in the battle.

40. The fight between the gods and the Asuras desirous of victory over each other was very tumultuous. It was pleasing to the brave and terrible to the others.

41. The battle ground became impassable and awful with the corpses of the gods and Asuras lying there in thousands but it was very pleasing to the brave.

CHAPTER EIGHT

(*The battle between the gods and Asuras*)

Brahmā said :—

1. O Nārada, O dear, thus I have described to you the fight between the rank and file of both the armies of the gods and Asuras. The fight was very tumultuous. Now listen to the fight between the two leaders on either side.

2-3. In the tumultuous fight that ensued reducing the numbers of the gods and the demons, lord Indra struck by the great spear fell from his elephant and became unconscious. The thunderbolt-bearing lord of gods attained great depression of spirits and swooned.

4. In the same manner, O dear, the guardians of the quarters, though powerful, were defeated in battle by the Asuras, great experts in warfare.

5. The other gods too were fought and defeated by the Asuras. Unable to bear their ferocity they took to flight.

6. The victorious Asuras, their effort having been successful, roared like lions and raised shouts of jubilation.

7. In the meantime Vīrabhadra reached the place furiously along with his heroic Gaṇas and approached Tāraka who professed to be a great hero.

8. The leader of the Gaṇas, the strong one born of the anger of Śiva, kept the gods in the rear and faced Tāraka desirous of fighting him.

9. Then the Pramathas and the jubilant Asuras, fond of great battle, fought one another.

10. Skilled adepts in warfare they hit and smashed one another with tridents, double-edged swords, nooses, axes and sharp-edged spikes.

11. Immediately after being hit hard with a trident by Vīrabhadra, Tāraka fell unconscious on the ground.

12. Regaining consciousness quickly Tāraka the excellent Asura got up and forcefully hit Vīrabhadra with his spear.

13. In the same manner, the heroic Vīrabhadra of great brilliance hit Tāraka with his sharp terrible trident.

14. The powerful king of the Asuras, the heroic Tāraka, hit Vīrabhadra[145] again with spear.

15. Fighting each other thus they hit each other with various weapons and missiles both being equally skilful in the art of warfare.

16. Even as others stood gazing, the two of great energy continued their duel causing hair to stand on ends, with tumultuous noise.

17. Then various military bands and drums like Bherīs, Mṛdaṅgas, Paṭahas, Āṇakas and Gomukhas were sounded by the soldiers terrifying those who happened to hear.

18. Both of them were severely wounded by the mutual hits and thrusts but still they continued their fight with added vigour like Mercury and Mars.

19. On seeing the fight between him and Vīrabhadra, you, the favourite of Śiva went there and said to Vīrabhadra,

Nārada said:—

20. "O Vīrabhadra, of great heroism, you are the leader of the Gaṇas. Please desist from this fight. Your killing him does not fit in properly".

21. On hearing your words, the leader of the Gaṇas Vīrabhadra became furious but spoke to you with palms joined in reverence.

Vīrabhadra said:—

22. O excellent sage, of great wisdom, listen to my weighty words. I will kill Tāraka. See my exploit today.

23. The soldiers who bring their masters to the battlefield are sinners. They are no better than eunuchs. They are doomed in the battle.

24. They will go the way of the wicked. Hell is definitely in store for them. Vīrabhadra should never be considered by you as such a despicable person.

145. Vīrabhadra, the chief of the gaṇas of Śiva has become a mythical Being. In the scriptures in the caves of Elephanta and Ellora he is represented with eight hands. According to tradition, he was created by Śiva to destroy Dakṣa's sacrifice, to harry away the Gods and sages who had assembled there. Dawson: H. M.

In the present context he figures as a prominent combatant on the side of the Gods against the Asura chief Tāraka.

25. Those whose bodies are rent and split with weapons and missiles, but who still fight fearlessly shall be praised here and hereafter. They derive wonderful happiness.

26. Let Viṣṇu and other gods listen to my words—I shall make the earth freed of Tāraka today even without bringing my master here.

27. Saying thus and taking up his trident, Vīrabhadra mentally meditated on Śiva and fought with Tāraka, accompanied by Pramathas.

28. With many heroic soldiers riding on bulls, wielding the tridents and possessing three eyes he shone well in the midst of that battle.

29. Keeping Vīrabhadra at their head, and shouting fearlessly jubilantly, hundreds of the Gaṇas fought with the Asuras.

30. The Asuras too, the dependants of the demon Tāraka, all equally strong and heroic, began to smash the Gaṇas furiously.

31. The terrific mutual fights between the demons and the Gaṇas happened again and again. Ultimately the Gaṇas, experts in the use of great missiles, came out victorious and were jubilant.

32. Defeated by the Gaṇas of great strength, the Asuras turned their faces and began to flee. They were distressed and agitated.

33. On seeing his army vanishing thus in flight, their protector, the Asura Tāraka, furiously rushed at the gods and the Gaṇas.

34. He assumed ten thousand hands and rode on a lion. In the battle that followed he felled the gods and the Gaṇas quickly.

35-36. On seeing such a perpetration of Tāraka, Vīrabhadra, the leader of the Gaṇas, became very furious. In order to kill him he took up his trident after remembering the lotuslike feet of Śiva. His brilliance then brightly illuminated all the quarters and the sky.

37. In the meantime, the master stopped the war. He prevented Vīrabāhu and others immediately in order to show his own might.

38. At his bidding Vīrabhadra returned from the bat-

tle. The heroic leader of the Asuras, Tāraka, was still in his unabated fury.

39. Then the Asura showered arrows on the gods and put them to distress. He was skilful in the use of various missiles in the war.

40. After causing a great havoc, Tāraka, the protector of Asuras, the most excellent among the brave, seemed invincible to the gods.

41. On seeing the gods terrified and slaughtered, Viṣṇu became furious and got ready to fight.

42. Taking discus Sudarśana, the bow Śārṅga and other weapons with him, lord Viṣṇu rushed to meet the great Asura in the battle.

43. O sage, a great fight ensued between Viṣṇu and Tāraka. It was very fierce It caused horripilation to the onlookers.

44. Lifting up his club, Viṣṇu hit the Asura with great force but the powerful Asura split it with his trident.

45. The infuriated lord offering shelter to the gods hit the leader of the Asuras by arrows discharged from his bow.

46. The heroic Asura Tāraka, the slayer of enemies, immediately split the arrows of the gods by his own sharp arrows.

47. The Asura Tāraka then quickly hit Viṣṇu[146] with his spear. On being hit thus, Viṣṇu fell unconscious on the ground.

48. In a trice, Viṣṇu got up and in rage seized his discus that was blazing with flames and he roared like a lion.

49. Viṣṇu hit the king of Asuras with it. Overwhelmed by the forceful hit he fell on the ground.

50. Getting up again, the foremost among Asuras and their leader, Tāraka using all his strength immediately split the discus with his spear.

51. Again he struck Viṣṇu the favourite of the gods with that great spear. The heroic Viṣṇu hit him back with Nandaka.

146. Murāri: 'The enemy of Mura'. It is an appellation of Viṣṇu who slew the Asura Mura. The latter was an ally of the Asura Naraka who ruled over Prāgjyotiṣa (modern Assam).

52 O sage, both Viṣṇu and the Asura, equally powerful, hit each other in the battle with unabated strength.

CHAPTER NINE

(The boasting of Tāraka and the fight between him and Indra, Viṣṇu, Vīrabhadra)

Brahmā said :—

1. O Guha, O lord of gods, O son of Śiva and Pārvatī, the fight between Viṣṇu and Tāraka is not proper. It is futile.

2. Tāraka the powerful cannot be killed by Viṣṇu. He has been granted such a boon by me. It is truth. I am telling you the truth.

3. O son of Pārvatī, none except you can be the slayer of this sinner. O great lord, my words shall be carried out by you.

4. O scorcher of enemies, please get ready to slay him. O son of Pārvatī you are born of Śiva for killing that demon.

5. O great hero, save the gods distressed in the battle. You are neither a boy nor a youth but the lord of all.

6. See Indra and Viṣṇu. They are agitated and distressed, So also the gods and the Gaṇas. Slay this great demon. Make the three worlds happy.

7. Formerly Indra and the guardians of the quarters had been conquered by him. Due to the power of his penance, the heroic Viṣṇu too has been threatened by him.

8. The entire universe of the three worlds has been defeated by this wicked Asura. Now, because of your presence, they have fought again.

9. Hence, O son of Śiva, this sinful being Tāraka shall be killed by you. Due to the boon granted by me he cannot be slain by any one else."

Brahmā said:—

10. On hearing these words of mine, Kumāra, son of Śiva, was delighted and he laughed. "So be it", said he.

11. Resolving to kill the Asura, the great lord, son of Śiva got down from the aerial chariot and stood on the ground.

12. Running on foot, seizing his lustrous spear blazing like a meteor, the powerful warrior Kumāra born of Śiva shone well.

13. On seeing the incomprehensible six-headed deity coming forward, fierce and unagitated, the Asura spoke to the gods derisively—"O this child indeed will slay the enemies !"

14. I will fight with him single-handed. I will kill the soldiers, the Gaṇas and the guardians of the quarters led by Viṣṇu.

15. Saying thus, the powerful Asura rushed at Kumāra to fight with him. Tāraka seized his wonderful spear and spoke to the gods.

Tāraka said :—

16. "How is it that you all kept Kumāra face to face with me? You gods are shameless especially Indra and Viṣṇu.

17. Formerly, both of them had acted in violation of the Vedic path. Listen, I shall describe the same.

18. Viṣṇu is deceptive, defective and indiscreet. It was by him that Bali[147] was formerly bound by taking recourse to deception with sinful intention.

19. The Asuras Madhu and Kaiṭabha[148] were beheaded by his roguishness. He forsook the Vedic path.

20. When the gods and Asuras sat for drinking the nectar it was he who violated the sanctity of the vows when he assumed the form of an enchantress.[149] Thus he slighted the Vedic path.

147. Bali, the son of Virocana, was an Asura-chief He was deceived by Viṣṇu in the form of a dwarfish Brahmin. The latter asked Bali to grant him three steps of ground and Bali consenting, the dwarf stepped and covered heaven and earth in two strides. However he desisted from taking the third step and left the nether region for Bali's sake.

148. Madhu and Kaiṭabha were the two demons sprung from the ear of Viṣṇu while he was asleep at the end of a Kalpa. They were about to kill Brahmā but were treacherously killed by Viṣṇu and thrown into the sea.

149. In the guise of an enchantress, Viṣṇu deprived Asuras of their right of drinking nectar produced from churning the ocean.

21. Taking birth as Rāma he killed a woman (Tāḍakā). Bālī's death was brought about by him with a vile trick. A brahmin descendant of Viśravas was killed by him.[150] Thus he violated the injunction of the Śruti.

22. Sinful that he was, he forsook his own innocent wife. There too, he violated the path of Śruti for achieving his selfish end.

23. In his sixth incarnation (as Paraśurāma)[151] he cut off the head of his own mother. This wicked man insulted his own preceptor's son.[152]

24. Incarnating as Kṛṣṇa he defiled the wives of others and forced them to violate the traditional virtues of the family. He contracted his marriages without any reference to the Vedic path.

25. Again in his ninth incarnation[153] he slighted the Vedic path and contrary to its principles, preached and established the atheistic philosophy called Buddhism.

26. How can he be considered an excellent, virtuous man, how can he be victorious in battle who has committed sin without caring for Vedic cult?

27. Indra, his elder brother, is a greater sinner. He has committed many sins for his self-interest.

28. To gain his selfish end, by him Diti's foetus was destroyed;[154] the modesty of Gautama's wife was outraged,[155] Vṛtra, the son of a brahmin, was killed.[156]

150. This refers to the slaying of the woman Tāḍakā and the monkey chief Bāli as well as the Brāhmaṇa King Rāvaṇa by Rāma, the son of Daśaratha, the seventh incarnation of Viṣṇu.

151. Viṣṇu in his sixth incarnation as Paraśurāma is said to have cut off the head of his mother Reṇukā who had incensed her husband by entertaining impure thoughts.

152 The event may refer to Paraśurāma who severed a tusk of Gaṇeśa, the son of his preceptor.

153. Gotama Buddha, the ninth incarnation of Viṣṇu, had revolted against Vedic doctrines and preached heretic and revolutionary thoughts of his own.

154. It refers to the episode of Indra, the elder brother of Viṣṇu who entered into the womb of Diti. the wife of Kaśyapa and cut the unborn child into fortynine pieces with his thunderbolt.

155. Indra seduced Ahalyā, the wife of Gautama and had to suffer for his adultery.

156. Indra incurred the sin of slaying Vṛtra, an Asura Brāhmaṇa.

29. He beheaded the brahmin Viśvarūpa,[157] the nephew of Bṛhaspati. Thus he transgressed the Vedic path.

30. Doing such sinful acts frequently Viṣṇu and Śiva are already deficient in splendour and their prowess is spent out.

31. You will never gain victory in the battle by relying on them. Why then did you foolishly come here to lose your lives ?

32. These two, always seeking selfish ends, do not know what is virtue. O gods, without virtue every rite becomes futile.

33. These two impudent fellows are presumptuous enough to place a child in front of me. Why ? I will kill the child too. They too will have it.

34. But let the child leave from here and save his life." After saying this, hinting at Indra and Viṣṇu he turned to Vīrabhadra and said.

35. "Formerly in the sacrifice of Dakṣa, many brahmins had been killed by you, O sinless one, I shall show you the fruit thereof."

Brahmā said :—

36. Saying this and dispossessing himself of his own merit by that act of censure, Tāraka the foremost among war-mongers seized his wonderful spear.

37. Indra who was going ahead of Kumāra hit the demon Tāraka forcibly with his thunderbolt as he was approaching the boy.

38. Tāraka was shattered and split by that blow of the thunderbolt, his power being sapped up already by the act of censure. He fell on the ground.

39. Though he fell down, he got up immediately and furiously hit Indra who was seated on an elephant, with his spear and felled him to the ground.

40. When Indra fell down there was a great hue and cry. On seeing it a great pain entered the army of the gods.

41. Know from me the vile action that Tāraka has

157. Indra cut off the three heads of Viśvarūpa, the son of Tvaṣṭṛ.

committed against virtue which is sure to bring about his own ruin.

42. He stamped on Indra with his foot after he fell down and seized his thunderbolt with which he hit him with great force.

43. Seeing Indra thus insulted, the powerful lord Viṣṇu lifted his discus and hit Tāraka.

44. Hit by the discus he fell on the ground. Getting up again, the lord of the Asuras hit Viṣṇu with his spear.

45. On being hit by the spear Viṣṇu fell on the ground. There was a great uproar. The gods lamented much.

46-47. Within a moment Viṣṇu got up but by that time Vīrabhadra came near the demon and dexterously raised his trident. The powerful Vīrabhadra hit him with all his force.

48. Hit by the trident he fell on the ground. Though he fell down, Tāraka of mighty splendour got up again.

49. The great hero, the leader of the entire host of Asuras hit Vīrabhadra in his chest with his great spear.

50. Vīrabhadra, hit by the spear furiously in his chest, fell unconscious on the ground.

51. The gods, the Gaṇas, Gandharvas, Serpents and Rākṣasas lamented frequently with cries of "Alas" "Alas."

52. Within a moment, the powerful Vīrabhadra, the slayer of enemies, got up lifting his trident aloft, that had the lustre of lightning and was blazing forth.

53. The trident had a halo around, like that of the sun, the moon and the fire. It illuminated the quarters by means of its brilliance; caused terror even in the hearts of the brave. It had a deadly splendour and blazed well.

54. When the powerful Vīrabhadra was about to hit the Asura with his trident, he was prevented by Kumāra.

CHAPTER TEN

(*Jubilation of the gods at the death of Tāraka*)

Brahmā said..—

1. After preventing Vīrabhadra, Kumāra, the slayer of enemies, desired the destruction of Tāraka after remembering the lotuslike feet of Śiva.

2. Then the powerful Kārttikeya of great splendour roared. Angrily he got ready for the fight. He was surrounded by a vast army.

3. Shouts of victory were raised by the gods and the Gaṇas. He was eulogised by the celestial sages with pleasing words.

4. The fight between Tāraka and Kumāra was terrific and unbearable. All the living beings were afraid.

5. O sage, even as all the persons stood gazing wonderingly, both of them fought each other with spears in their hands.

6. Each was wounded in the heart by the other with the spear. Each tried to escape from the other's thrust. Both were equally strong like two lions. Both were fully equipped for the fight.

7. They fought and hit each other's spear taking recourse to the mantras Vaitālika, Khecaraka, Prāptika etc.

8. With these mantras they were possessed of magical properties. They wonderfully fought each other using their full strength and exploits.

9. They were equally good adepts in fighting. Each wanted to kill the other. They utilised all their power. With the edges of spears they hit each other.

10. They hit or cut each other's head, neck, thighs, knees, hips, heart, chest and the back.

11. They continued the fight swaggering and vaunting with heroic words. They were experts in different tactics of warfare. They were equally strong. They desired to kill each other.

158. Vaitālika, Khecaraka and Prāpti signify the various attainments of magical or supernatural type which can be exploited for various purposes.

12. All the gods Gandharvas and Kinnaras stood as mere onlookers. "Who will win this battle ?" they asked each other.

13. Then a celestial voice rose appeasing the gods—"In this battle Kumāra will kill the Asura Tāraka.

14. None of the gods need be anxious. All shall rest assured. For your welfare Śiva Himself is standing here in the form of His son."

15. On hearing the auspicious words uttered by the celestial voice, Kumāra became happy. He was surrounded by the Pramathas. He resolved to kill Tāraka, the king of Asuras.

16. The infuriated Kumāra of powerful arms used his full strength and hit Asura Tāraka in between his nipples.

17. Slighting that blow, the leading demon Tāraka, hit Kumāra angrily with his spear.

18. At the blow of the spear, the son of Śiva became unconscious. He regained his consciousness in a few minutes. He was eulogised by the great sages.

19. Kumāra became furious like a maddened lion and was desirous of killing the Asura. The powerful Kumāra hit Tāraka with his spear.

20. Thus both Kumāra and Tāraka equally inflamed and equally well versed in the battle of spears fought each other.

21. Both appeared to possess plenty of practice. Both had the desire to gain the upper hand. Both fought on foot, had wonderful forms and features and were equally courageous.

22. With massive heaps of fatal missiles they hit each other. They had various ways of attack. They roared. They exhibited their all exploits.

23. The onlookers, the gods, the Gandharvas and the Kinnaras were much surprised. They did not speak anything there.

24. The wind did not blow. The sun became dim. The earth quaked along with mountains and forests.

25. In the meantime Himālaya and other mountains anxious to see Kumāra out of affection came there.

26. On seeing the mountains extremely terrified,

Kumāra the son of Śiva and Pārvatī spoke enlightening them thereby.

Kumāra said :—

27. O mountains, O fortunate sirs, do not be vexed, or worried. Even as you stand looking on I will kill this sinner.

28. Consoling the mountains, the gods and the Gaṇas thus, and bowing to Śiva and Pārvatī he took up his brilliant spear.

29. The heroic Kumāra, son of Śiva the great lord, with the spear in his hand shone in his resolve to kill Tāraka.

30. Possessing the brilliance of Śiva, Kumāra with his spear struck Tāraka who had harrassed the worlds.

31. Immediately the Asura Tāraka the ruler of the hosts of Asuras, although very heroic, fell on the ground with all his limbs shattered.

32. The great warrior Tāraka was slain by Kumāra. O sage, even as all were looking on, he passed away.

33. On seeing the powerful Asura fallen dead in the battle, the hero did not go and attack him again.

34. When the powerful Asura was slain, other Asuras were killed by gods and Gaṇas.

35. Some of the Asuras who were afraid joined their palms in reverence. In the battle the limbs of many Asuras were chopped off and severed. Thousands were killed too.

36. Some of the Asuras shrieking "O save O save" with palms joined in reverence sought refuge in Kumāra.

37. Numberless Asuras were killed. Many fled. The fleeing Asuras were beaten and harassed by the gods and the Gaṇas.

38. Thousands of them fled to Pātāla for their life. Those who tried to flee were disappointed and put to distress.

39. O great sage, thus the entire army of the Asuras disappeared. None dared to remain there for fear of the gods and the Gaṇas.

40. When the wicked Asura was killed, the whole universe became freed of thorns, freed from the danger and nuisance of the Asuras. Indra and other gods became happy.

41. Thus when Kumāra came out victorious the gods were happy. The three worlds attained great pleasure.

42. On knowing about the victory of Kārttikeya, Śiva came there joyously with his beloved and the Gaṇas.

43. He took his son on his lap and fondled him with pleasure. Pārvatī in her flutter of affection took Kumāra, resplendent as the sun, on her lap and fondled him with pleasure.

44. Then Himavat came there along with his sons, kinsmen and servants. He eulogised Śiva and Guha

45. The delighted gods, Gaṇas and sages, Siddhas and Cāraṇas eulogised Pārvatī, Śiva and the son of Śiva.

46. The secondary gods poured a great shower of flowers. The chiefs of Gandharvas sang. The celestial damsels danced.

47. The musical instruments were played sweetly then. Frequent loud shouts of "Victory" and "Obeisance" were raised.

48. Viṣṇu too in my company was very glad. He respectfully eulogised Śiva, Pārvatī and Kumāra.

49. Keeping Kumāra in front, Brahmā, Indra and other gods performed the rite of Nīrājana lovingly. Other sages too did likewise.

50. Then there was great jubilation with vocal and instrumental music and chantings of the Vedas. Hymns too were sung.

51. The lord of the universe was eulogised, O sage, by the delighted gods and Gaṇas by means of vocal and instrumental music.

52. Then eulogised by all, lord Śiva along with Pārvatī the mother of the universe, went to his mountain surrounded by the Gaṇas.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

(The Victory of Kumāra and the death of Bāṇa and Pralamba)

Brahmā said:—

1. O sage, in the meantime the mountain Krauñca, harassed by Bāṇa came there and sought refuge in Kumāra.

2. This Bāṇa had been fleeing from the previous battle, unable to bear the brilliance of the lord. He with the army of ten thousand persons, inflicted pain on Krauñca with the tip of his missiles.

3. The mountain Krauñca devoutly bowed at the lotus-like feet of Kumāra and eulogised him with reverence with words full of love.

Krauñca said:—

4. O Kumāra, O Skanda, O lord of gods, O slayer of the Asura Tāraka protect me who have sought refuge in you. I am harassed by the Asura Bāṇa.

5. O Mahāsena, O lord, O merciful one, routed and uprooted from the battle with you he came and harassed me.

6. Afflicted by him I have run from him and sought refuge in you. O lord of gods, born amongst the reeds, be merciful.

7. O lord, please slay the Asura Bāṇa. Make me happy. You are the slayer of Asuras and a special saviour of the gods. You are a self-ruler.

Brahmā said:—

8. Skanda who was thus eulogised by Krauñca became delighted. He, the saviour of the devotees, took up his matchless spear and remembered Śiva.

9. The son of Śiva hurled the spear aiming at Bāṇa. It gave loud report, blazing forth the quarters and the sky.

10. O sage, reducing the Asuras to ashes along with his army in a trice, the great spear returned to Kumāra.

11. The lord Kumāra told Krauñca, the chief of the

mountains, "Go home fearlessly. That Asura has been slain along with his army."

12. On hearing the words of the lord, the delighted lord of the mountains eulogised Kumāra the slayer of his enemy and went back to his abode.

13. O sage, with great pleasure and observing the rules Skanda installed three phallic emblems of Śiva that quell all sins.

14. The first is called Pratijñeśvara, the second Kapāleśvara and the last Kumāreśvara. The three are capable of conferring all the achievements.

15. Thereafter Kumāra, the lord of all, joyously installed the phallic image Stambheśvara,[159] near the column of victory.

16. Then Viṣṇu and other gods joyously installed the phallic emblem of Śiva, the lord of the gods.

17. The glory of the phallic emblems of Śiva was marvellous; conferring all cherished desires and salvation to the devotees.

18. Then the delighted Viṣṇu and the gods desired to go to the chief of mountains joyously putting Bṛhaspati ahead.

19. Then Kumuda[160] the son of Śeṣa who was harassed by the Asuras came and sought refuge in Kumāra.

20. Another follower of Tāraka—Pralamba who had fled from the previous battle wrought great havoc with full force.

21. Kumuda, the great son of Śeṣa the lord of serpents, sought refuge in Kumāra the son of Pārvatī and eulogised him.

Kumuda said:—

22. O excellent son of great lord, lord of the gods, O

159. The four phallic images of Śiva named Pratijñeśvara. Kapāleśvara, Kumāreśvara and Stambheśvara were set up at Cambay, the scene of the battlefield, to commemorate the Victory of Guha over Tāraka, the Asura-chief.

160. According to this account, Kumuda, the son of the serpent-chief Śeṣa, was troubled by the Asura Pralamba who was the ally of Tāraka. Kumuda slew Pralamba and relieved Kumuda of distress.

This Pralamba is distinct from the Asura of the same name whose destruction at the hands of Balarāma is recorded in the Mahābhārata.

great chief, I am afflicted by Pralamba and am seeking refuge in you.

23. O Kumāra, O Skanda, O lord of the gods, O great lord, O slayer of Tāraka, save me harassed by the Asura Pralamba and seeking refuge in you.

24. You are the kinsman of the distressed, the ocean of mercy, favourably disposed to the devotees, the slayer of the wicked, worthy of refuge and the goal of the good.

25. Eulogised thus by Kumuda and requested to slay the demon Pralamba, the lord took up his spear after remembering the lotus-like feet of Śiva.

26. The son of Pārvatī hurled the spear at Pralamba. It made a loud report. The quarters and the sky blazed.

27. Reducing that powerful Asura to ashes in a trice the spear carried out the job without strain and returned to Kumāra.

28. Then Kumāra told the Nāga child Kumuda—"Go home fearlessly. That Asura has been slain along with his army."

29. On hearing the words of Guha, Kumuda, the son of the Nāga chief eulogised and bowed to Kumāra and went to Pātāla[161] in great delight.

30. Thus the story[162] of the victory of Kumāra, including the wonderful way in which Tāraka was slain, has been narrated by me, O noble sage.

31. It is the divine story that removes all sins. It bestows all desires on men. It is conducive to the increase of wealth, glory and longevity. It confers worldly pleasures and salvation on the good.

32. Those who recite this divine story of Kumāra and glorify him are infinitely fortunate and attain Śivaloka.

161. Pātāla is an island accessible through the searoute. It is an abode of the Nāgas with Bhogavatī as the capital. (cf M M K. Pāṭala, XL P. 454) It is variously identified with Ceylon in the mid-ocean. G P. 1. 69. 24), Indo-China and old Annam. See Avasthi, Studies in Sk. P. P. 113.

162. As ŚP states, the victory of Kumāra over the Asura Tāraka is a factual happening (vṛttam), while V. S. Agrawal insists on the symbolic interpretation of the legend. According to him Tāraka is the Āsuric form in the individual which remains in contact with the matter and is soiled by it. This form is suppressed and sublimated by Kumāra who is the symbol of Śakti quickened by Śiva.

33. Those who listen to his glory with devotion and faith will attain divine salvation hereafter after enjoying great happiness here.

CHAPTER TWELVE

(*The story of Śiva and Pārvatī including that of Kārttikeya*)

Brahmā said:—

1. On seeing Tāraka killed, Viṣṇu and other gods, with faces refulgent with pleasure, eulogised Kārttikeya with devotion.

The gods said:—

2. Obeisance to you of good features, obeisance to you who confer auspiciousness on the universe, O kinsman of the universe, obeisance be to you. Obeisance to you, O purifier of the universe.

3. Obeisance to you, the slayer of the chief of the Asuras. O lord, obeisance to the slayer of the Asura Bāṇa. Obeisance to the destroyer of Pralamba. Obeisance to you of holy features. Obeisance to you, O son of Śiva.

4. You alone are the creator, sustainer and annihilator of the universe. You, born of firegod, be pleased. Your cosmic image is identical with the universe. O son of Śiva, kinsman of the distressed, be pleased.

5. O lord, protector of the gods, O lord, save us always. O merciful one, protector of gods, be pleased.

6. After killing the Asura Tāraka along with his followers, O great lord, the gods have been freed from adversities by you.

Brahmā said:—

7. O sage, thus eulogised by Viṣṇu and the other gods, lord Kumāra granted them fresh boons in order.

8. On seeing the mountains eulogising, the son of Śiva became very glad and spoke to them after granting boons.

Skanda said:—

9. All of you mountains will become worthy of being

worshipped by the sages and resorted to by persons following the paths of action and knowledge.

10. O mountains, at my word you will be assuming the forms of phallic emblems, the special forms of Śiva. There is no doubt about it.

11. My maternal grandfather, the excellent mountain Himavat, will become the fortunate bestower of fruits to ascetics.

The gods said:—

12. By killing Tāraka the lord of Asuras, and by granting bōons thus, all of us including the mobile and immobile beings have been made happy by you.

13. Now, it behoves you to go to Kailāsa with great pleasure, to the abode of Śiva in order to see your mother and father Śiva and Pārvatī.

Brahmā said:—

14. After saying thus and obtaining his permission, Viṣṇu and other gods went jubilantly to that mountain along with Kumāra.

15. When the lord Kumāra started to Kailāsa, the abode of Śiva, sounds of "Victory" arose indicating great auspiciousness.

16. Kumāra got in the richly decorated aerial chariot that shone above all the things.

17. O sage, with great pleasure, Viṣṇu and I held the chowries aloft above the head of the lord with alertness.

18. Indra and other gods, rendering suitable service to Kumāra went ahead joyously flanking him on all sides.

19. They reached Śiva's mountain crying shouts of victory to Śiva. They entered the precincts with delight. Auspicious sounds arose.

20. On seeing Śiva and Pārvatī, Viṣṇu and other gods bowed to Śiva with devotion and stood there humbly with palms joined in reverence.

21. Kumāra descended from the aerial chariot in all humility and bowed joyously to Śiva and Pārvatī seated on a throne.

22. O Nārada, on seeing their beloved son Kumāra, the lordly couple Śiva and Pārvatī rejoiced much.

23. The great lord got up, kissed him on the head with joy, stroked him with the hand and placed him on his lap.

24. With great affection, the highly delighted Śiva kissed the face of Kumāra, the great lord and the slayer of Tāraka.

25. Pārvatī, too got up and placed him on her lap. Keeping him close to her head with great affection she kissed his lotus-like face.

26. O dear Nārada, the joy of the couple—Śiva and Pārvatī who followed the worldly conventions, increased very much.

27. There was great jubilation in the abode of Śiva. Everywhere the sound of shouts "Victory" and "Obeisance" rose up.

28. O sage, then Viṣṇu, other gods and the sages bowed joyously to Śiva. They eulogised Him.

The gods said:—

29. O lord of the gods, O bestower of protection to your devotees, Obeisance, Obeisance to you many times, O merciful lord Śiva.

30. Wonderful indeed, O great lord, is your divine sport, conferring happiness to all good men, O Śiva, kinsman to the distressed, O lord.

31. We are deluded in our intellects. We are ignorant of the procedure of your worship, O eternal one. We do not know your invocation nor your wonderful course, O lord.

32. Obeisance to you, the support of the waters of the Gaṅgā, to the deity possessed of the attributes, obeisance to the lord of the gods, obeisance to Śiva.

33. Obeisance to the bull-bannered lord Śiva, obeisance to the lord of Gaṇas; Obeisance to the lord of all. Obeisance to the lord of the three worlds.

34. O lord, obeisance to you, the annihilator, the sustainer and creator of the worlds. O lord of gods, obeisance to you, the lord of three attributes and the eternal.

35. Obeisance to the lord free from attachment; obeisance to Śiva the great soul. Obeisance to the pure beyond the world of matter, obeisance to the great, the unwasting.

36. Obeisance to you the god of death holding the staff of punishment and noose in the hand. Obeisance to the chief of the deities invoked by Vedic mantras. Obeisance to you the hundred-tongued deity.

37. O lord, everything has come out of your body whether past, present or future, whether mobile or immobile.

38. O lord, protect us always. O supreme lord, we have sought refuge in you in every respect.

39. Obeisance to you, the blue-necked Rudra, of the form of offering. Obeisance to you both possessed and devoid of forms, the multiformed one.

40. Obeisance to Śiva, the blue-necked, the wearer of ashes on the limbs from the funeral pyre. Obeisance to you Śrīkaṇṭha and Nīlaśikhaṇḍa.

41. Obeisance to you saluted by all, saluted by the Yogins. Obeisance to you, the great lord, whose feet are worshipped by all.

42. You are Brahmā among all the gods, you are Nīlalohita among Rudras; you are the soul in all living beings; you are the Puruṣa of Sāṅkhya system.

43. You are Sumeru among mountains, you are the moon among the stars. You are Vasiṣṭha among the sages and you are Indra among the gods.

44. You are Oṁkāra among all Vedic passages; O great lord, be our protector. For the benefit of the worlds you nourish the Beings.

45. O great lord, O fortunate one, O scrutinizer of the good and evil, O lord of gods, make us flourish as those who carry out your instructions.

46. In your millions and millions of forms we are unable to realize your true self. O lord of gods, obeisance be to you.

***Brahmā said*:—**

47. After eulogising thus and bowing to him frequently, Viṣṇu and other gods stood before him after placing Skanda ahead.

48. On hearing the eulogy of the gods, Śiva, the lord of all, the self-ruler was delighted. The compassionate lord then laughed.

49. Śiva the great Īśāna, the kinsman of the distressed, the goal of the good, became delighted and spoke to Viṣṇu and other important gods.

Śiva said:—

50. O Viṣṇu, O Brahmā, O gods, listen to my words with attention. I am merciful. I shall by all means protect you, the gods.

51. The lord of the three worlds is a slayer of the wicked. He is favourably disposed to his devotees. He is the creator, sustainer and annihilator of all yet free from aberrations.

52. O excellent gods, whenever you are faced with misery you shall worship me for your happiness.

Brahmā said:—

53-54. O sage, thus ordered, Viṣṇu, the other gods and the sages bowed to Śiva, Pārvatī, and Kumāra joyously, and returned to their abodes in great delight singing the pleasant glory of Śiva, Pārvatī and their son.

55. Śiva stayed on the mountain joyously along with Pārvatī, the Gaṇas and Kumāra. Lord Śiva was much pleased.

56. Thus O sage, the divine and pleasant story of Kumāra and Śiva has been narrated to you. What else do you wish to hear ?

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

(*The birth of Gaṇeśa*)

Sūta said :—

1. On hearing the marvellously excellent story of the slayer of Tāraka thus, Nārada was highly delighted and he lovingly asked Brahmā.

Nārada said :—

2. O lord of gods and people, O storehouse of Śiva's cult, the excellent story of Kārttikeya, far better than nectar, has been heard by me.

3. Now I wish to hear the excellent story of Gaṇeśa, the details of his divine nativity, auspicious of the auspicious.

Sūta said :—

4. On hearing the words of Nārada the great sage, Brahmā became delighted and replied to him remembering Śiva.

Brahmā said:—

5. Due to the difference of Kalpas, the story of the birth of Gaṇeśa is told in different ways. According to one account he is born of the great lord. His head looked at by Śani[163] was cut off and an elephant's head was put on him.

6. Now we narrate the story of the birth of Gaṇeśa in Śvetakalpa[164] when his head was cut off by the merciful Śiva.

7. No suspicion need be entertained, O sage. Śiva is certainly the cause of enjoyment and protection. He is the lord of all. Śiva is possessed as well as devoid of attributes.

8. It is by His divine sport that the entire universe is created, sustained and annihilated. O excellent sage, listen to what is relevant to the context, with attention.

9. A long time had lapsed after the marriage of Śiva and His return to Kailāsa that Gaṇeśa was born.

10. Once the friends Jayā and Vijayā conferred with Pārvatī and discussed.

11. All the Gaṇas of Rudra carry out the orders of

163. Śani (the planet Saturn) is called the evil-eyed (Krūradṛś), for his glance casts an evil effect. The present context refers to a legend of Pārvatī who proud of her son, Gaṇeśa, asked Śani to look at him. Śani looked and the child's head was burnt to ashes. Pārvatī felt greatly distressed and Brahmā offered consolation advising her to replace the head with the first she could find and that was an elephant's.

164. Śvetakalpa, a short form of Śvetavārāha Kalpa, is one of the thirty Kalpas. According to the Purāṇas the legends of one Kalpa are repeated in the other. In this process some modifications in the accounts are bound to happen with the changes in the happenings. The legend of Gaṇeśa as recorded in this chapter belongs to Śvetavārāhakalpa. It is distinct from the one referred to above.

Śiva. They all, Nandin, Bhṛṅgin and others are in a way our own.

12. Pramathas are numerous. But none of them can be called our own. They all stand at the portals, subservient to Śiva's behests.

13. They also may be called our own but our mind is not in unison with them. Hence, O sinless lady, one, our own must be created.

Brahmā said :—

14. Goddess Pārvatī to whom this charming suggestion was made by the two friends considered it wholesome and resolved to carry it out.

15. Once when Pārvatī was taking her bath, Sadāśiva rebuked Nandin and came into the inner apartment.

16. The mother of the universe, seeing the untimely arrival of Śiva in the midst of her bath and toilet stood up. The beautiful lady was very shy then.

17. The goddess decided that her friend's suggestion would be conducive to her good and was so enthusiastic.

18. At the time when the incident occurred, Pārvatī, the great Māyā, the great goddess, thought as follows.

19. "There must be a servant of my own who will be expert in his duties. He must not stray from my behest even a speck."

20. Thinking thus the goddess created a person with all the characteristics, out of the dirt[165] from her body.

21. He was spotless and handsome in every part of his body. He was huge in size and had all brilliance, strength and valour.

22-23. She gave him various clothes and ornaments. She blessed him with benediction and said—"You are my son. You are my own. I have none else to call my own". Thus addressed the person bowed to her and said:—

Gaṇeśa said :—

24. "What is your order ? I shall accomplish what you command." Thus addressed, Pārvatī replied to her son.

165. According to this account, Gaṇeśa was born of the scurf of Pārvatī's body, without the intervention of Śiva.

Pārvatī said :—

25. "O dear, listen to my words. Work as my gatekeeper from today. You are my son. You are my own. It is not otherwise. There is none-else who belongs to me.

26. O good son, without my permission, no one, by any means, shall intrude my apartment. I tell you the fact."

Brahmā said:—

27. O sage, saying this, she gave him a hard stick. On seeing his handsome features she was delighted.

28. Out of love and mercy she embraced and kissed him. She placed him armed with a staff at her entrance as the gatekeeper.

29. Then the son of the goddess, of great heroic power, stayed at the doorway armed with a staff with a desire to do what was good to her.

30. Thus placing her son at the doorway, Pārvatī began to take bath with her friends, unworried.

31. O excellent sage, at this very moment Śiva who is eagerly indulgent and an expert in various divine sports came near the door.

32. Not knowing that he was lord Śiva, the consort of Pārvatī, Gaṇeśa said—"O sir, without my mother's permission you shall not go in now.

33. My mother has entered the bath. Where are you going now? Go away" saying thus, he took up his staff to ward him off.

34. On seeing him Śiva said "O foolish fellow, whom are you forbidding? O wicked knave, don't you know me? I am Śiva, none else".

35. Thereupon Gaṇeśa beat Śiva with the staff. Śiva expert in various sports became infuriated and spoke to his son thus.

Siva said:—

36. "You are a fool, You do not know that I am Śiva, the husband of Pārvatī. O boy, I go in my own house. Why do you forbid me?"

Brahmā said:—

37. When lord Śiva tried to enter the house, Gaṇeśa became infuriated, O brahmin, and struck him with his staff once again.

38. Then Śiva too became furious. He commanded his own Gaṇas—"Who is this fellow here ? What is he doing? O Gaṇas, enquire."

39. After saying this, the furious Śiva stood outside the house. The lord, following the worldly conventions, is capable of various wonderful sports.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

(*The Gaṇas argue and wrangle*)

Brahmā said:—

1. The infuriated Gaṇas of Śiva at his bidding went there and questioned the son of Pārvatī who stood at the gate.

Śiva's Gaṇas said:—

2. "Who are you? Whence do you come? What do you propose to do? If you have a desire to remain alive go away from here."

Brahmā said:—

3. On hearing their words, the son of Pārvatī who was armed with the staff spoke to the Gaṇas as follows:—

Gaṇeśa said:—

4. O "handsome fellows, who are you? Whence have you come? Go away. Why have you come here and why do you stand in opposition to me ?"

Brahmā said:—

5. On hearing his words, Śiva's Gaṇas of great heroism and arrogance laughingly spoke to one another.

6. After conferring with one another, the infuriated Pārṣadas of Śiva replied to Gaṇeśa, the doorkeeper.

Siva's Gaṇas said:—

7. "Listen. We are the excellent Gaṇas of Śiva. We are his doorkeepers. We have come here to throw you out at the bidding of lord Śiva.

8. Considering you too, as one of the Gaṇas, we are not going to kill you. Otherwise you would have been killed. Better stay away yourself. Why do you court death ?"

Brahmā said :—

9. Though warned thus, Gaṇeśa, the son of Pārvatī, stood fearless. He did not leave his post at the door. He rebuked Śiva's Gaṇas.

10. After hearing his words, the Gaṇas of Śiva went back and informed Śiva about his stand.

11. O sage, on hearing their words, lord Śiva of wonderful divine sports, following the worldly conventions rebuked his Gaṇas.

Lord Śiva said :—

12. "Who is this fellow ? What does he say ? He is standing there haughtily as though he is our enemy. What will that wicked knave do ? Certainly he wants to die.

13. Why ? Are you dastardly eunuchs to stand here helplessly and complain to me about him. Let this new door-keeper be thrown out."

Brahmā said :—

14. Thus commanded by lord Śiva of wonderful sports the Gaṇas returned to the place and spoke to the door-keeper.

Śiva's Gaṇas said:—

15. O gatekeeper, who are you standing here ? Why have you been stationed here ? Why don't you care for us. How can you thus remain alive ?

16. We are here the duly appointed doorkeepers. What are you saying ? A jackal sitting on a lion's seat wishes for happiness.

17. O fool, you will roar only as long as you do not

feel the brunt of our attack. Erelong you will fall by feeling the same."

18. Thus taunted by them, Gaṇeśa became furious and took the staff with his hands and struck the Gaṇas even as they continued to speak harsh words.

19. Then the fearless Gaṇeśa, son of Pārvatī rebuked the heroic Gaṇas of Śiva and spoke as follows:—

The son of Pārvatī said:—

20. "Get away. Get away. Or I shall give you a foretaste of my fierce valour. You will be the laughing-stock of all."

21. On hearing these words of Geṇeśa, the Gaṇas of Śiva spoke to one another.

Śiva's Gaṇas said:—

22. What shall be done ? Where shall we go ? Why shall we not act ? Bounds of decency are observed by us. He would not have acted thus, otherwise.

Brahmā said:—

23. Then the Gaṇas of Śiva went to Śiva who was standing at the distance of a Krośa from Kailāsa and spoke to him.

24. Śiva ridiculed them all. The trident-armed great lord of fierce temperament spoke to his Gaṇas who professed to be heroes.

Śiva said:—

25. "Hello, Gaṇas, impotent wretches, you profess to be heroic but are never so. You are unfit to stand before me and speak. If he is only taunted he will speak in similar tone again.

26. Go and beat him. Some one among you may be competent to do so. Why should I speak more? He must be driven away."

Brahmā said:—

27. O great sage, when rebuked thus by lord Śiva, the excellent Gaṇas went back and spoke to him.

Śiva's Gaṇas said:—

28. Hello you boy there, listen. Why do you speak so arrogantly? You go away from here. If not, your death is certain.

Brahmā said:—

29. On hearing the words of Śiva's servants the son of Pārvatī became unhappy and thought "What shall I do?"

30. In the meantime, the goddess heard the noise of this wrangle between the Gaṇas and the doorkeeper, then looked at her friend and spoke. "Go and see."

31. The friend came to the door and saw them for a moment. She understood the whole matter. She was delighted and returned to Pārvatī.

32. O sage, coming back she reported the matter to Pārvatī as it had occurred.

The friend said:—

33. O great Goddess, the heroic Gaṇas of Śiva arc taunting and rebuking our own Gaṇa who is standing at the door.

34. How do these Gaṇas and Śiva enter your apartment suddenly without looking to your convenience? This is not good for you.

35. Even after undergoing the misery of rebuke etc. he, our Gaṇa, has done well in not allowing anyone in.

36. What is more? They are arguing too. When the argument has started, they cannot come in happily.

37. Now that they have started the argument let them conquer him and enter victoriously. Not otherwise, my dear friend.

38. When this man belonging to us is taunted, it amounts to our being taunted. Hence, O gentle lady, you shall not abandon your prestige of high order.

39. Śiva always squeezes you like a crab, O Satī. What will he do now? His pride will take a favourable turn for us.

Brahmā said:—

40. Alas, being subservient to Śiva's wish, Pārvatī stood there for a moment.

41. Then taking up a haughty mood she spoke to herself.

Pārvatī said:—

42. "Alas, he did not wait for a moment. Why should he force his way in ? What shall be done now ? Or shall I adopt a humble attitude.

43. What is to happen happens. What is done cannot be altered ?" After saying this, Pārvatī sent her again lovingly.

44. The friend came to the door and told Gaṇeśa what Pārvatī had said with affection.

The friend said:—

45. O gentle sir, well done. Let them not enter forcibly. What are these Gaṇas before you ? Can they win a person like you ?

46. Whether good or bad let your duty be done. If you are conquered there will be no further enmity at all.

Brahmā said:—

47. On hearing the words of the friend and his mother Gaṇeśvara became highly delighted, strengthened and lifted up.

48. Girting up his loins, tying his turban firmly and clapping his calves and thighs, he spoke fearlessly to all the Gaṇas.

Gaṇeśa said:—

49. I am the son of Pārvatī. You are the Gaṇas of Śiva. Both of us are thus equal. Let your duty be done, now.

50. You are all doorkeepers. How is it that I am not? You are standing there and I am standing here. This is certain.

51. When it is certain that you are standing here, you must carry out the directions of Śiva.

52. O heroes, now I have to carry out the orders of Pārvatī faithfully. I have decided what is proper.

53. Hence, O Gaṇas of Śiva, you shall listen with at-

tention. You shall not enter the apartment either forcibly or humbly.

Brahmā said:—

54. The Gaṇas when decisively told by Gaṇeśa became ashamed. They went to Śiva. After bowing to him they stood in front of him.

55. Then they acquainted him with that news of wonderful nature. They joined their palms, stooped their shoulders, eulogised Śiva and stood in front of him.

56. On hearing the detailed news mentioned by his Gaṇas, Śiva replied following the worldly conventions.

Śiva said:—

57. O Gaṇas, hear you all. A battle may not be a proper course. You are all my own. He is Pārvatī's Gaṇa.

58. But if we are going to be humble, there is likely to be a rumour: "Śiva is subservient to his wife." O Gaṇas, this is certainly derogatory to me.

59. The policy of meeting an action with another (Tit for tat) is a weighty one. That single-handed Gaṇa is a mere boy. What valour can be expected of him ?

60. O Gaṇas, you are all experts in warfare and reputed to be so in the world. You are my own men. How can you forsake war and demean yourselves ?

61. How can a woman be obdurate especially with her husband ? Pārvatī will certainly derive the fruit of what she has done.

62. Hence, my heroic men, listen to my words with attention. This war has to be fought by all means. Let what is in store happen."

Brahmā said:—

63. O excellent sage, O brahmin, after saying thus, Śiva an adept in various divine sports became silent observing the ways of the world.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

(*Gaṇeśa's battle*)

Brahmā said:—

1. When Śiva told them thus, they came to a decisive resolution. They got ready and went to Śiva's palace.

2. On seeing the excellent Gaṇas, fully equipped for war, coming, Gaṇeśa spoke thus to them.

Gaṇeśa said:—

3. Welcome to the leaders of Gaṇas, carrying out the behests of Śiva. I am only one and that too a mere boy carrying out the directions of Pārvatī.

4. Yet let the goddess see the strength of her son. Let Śiva see the strength of his Gaṇas too.

5. The fight between the parties of Pārvatī and Śiva is the one between a strong army and a boy. You are all experts in warfare and have fought in many a battle.

6. I have never fought in a battle before. I am a mere boy. I am going to fight now. Still if you are put to shame, it will be shameful to Śiva and Pārvatī.

7. But that will not happen to me. If I am put to shame, the contrary will happen to me. Pārvatī and Śiva will be put to shame but not I.

8. O leader of the Gaṇas, the war shall be fought after realising this. You shall look up to your lord and I to my mother.

9. What sort of a fight shall be fought? Let what is destined to occur, occur. No one in the three worlds can ward it off.

Brahmā said:—

10. When thus taunted and rebuked they rushed towards him with big batons, decorating their arms and taking up different kinds of weapons.

11. Gnashing their teeth, grunting and bellowing and calling out "See, See", the Gaṇas rushed at him.

12. Nandin came first and caught hold of his leg. He

pulled at it. Bhṛṅgin then rushed at him and caught hold of his other leg.

13. Before the Gaṇas of Śiva had time to pull his legs Gaṇeśa struck a blow at their hands and got his legs free.

14. Then seizing a big iron club and standing at the doorway he smashed the gaṇas.

15. Some got their hands broken, others got their backs smothered. The heads of others were shattered and the foreheads of some were crushed.

16. The knees of some were fractured, the shoulders of others were blasted. Those who came in front were hit in the chest.

17. Some fell on the ground, some fled in various directions, some got their legs broken and some fled to Śiva.

18-19. Now none among them stood face to face. Just as deer flee to any direction on seeing a lion, the Gaṇas, who were thousands in number fled in that manner. Then Gaṇeśa returned to doorway and stood there.

20. He was seen as the annihilator of all in the manner of Yama, the terrible god of death at the end of a Kalpa.

21. At this time, urged by Nārada, all the gods including Viṣṇu and Indra came there.

22. Standing in front of Śiva and bowing to him with a desire to secure good for him they said—"O lord, be pleased to command us.

23. You are the great Brahman, the lord of all, the creator, the sustainer and the annihilator of all created things. All are your servants.

24. You are intrinsically devoid of attributes but by means of your sports you assume Rājasika, Sāttvika and Tāmasika forms. O lord, what sort of sport you are indulging in, now ?"

Brahmā said :—

25. O excellent sage, on hearing their words and seeing the Gaṇas completely shattered, lord Śiva told them everything.

26. O excellent sage, Śiva, the lord of all, the consort of Pārvatī, then laughingly told me, Brahmā.

Śiva said :—

27. O Brahmā, listen. A boy is standing at the entrance to my house. He is very strong. He has a staff in his hand. He prevents me from entering the house.

28. He strikes very dexterously. He has destroyed many of my Pārṣadas. He has forcefully defeated my Gaṇas.

29. O Brahmā, you alone should go there. This strong boy shall be propitiated. O Brahmā, you shall do everything to bring him under control.

Brahmā said :—

30. On hearing the words of the lord and unable to know the reality, being deluded by ignorance, O dear, I went near Gaṇeśa accompanied by the sages.

31. On seeing me approaching, the powerful Gaṇeśa came to me very furiously and plucked my moustache and beard.

32. "Forgive me. Forgive me, O lord. I have not come for fighting. I am a brahmin and shall be blessed. I have come to make peace and I will cause no harm."

33. While I said thus, O brahmin, the heroic Gaṇeśa, the boy of great valour uncommon to the boys took up the iron club.

34. On seeing the powerful Gaṇeśa seizing the iron club I began to run away immediately.

35. The others too who were shouting "Go, Go" were struck down with the iron club. Some fell themselves and some were felled by him.

36. Some of them fled to Śiva in a trice and intimated to him the details of the incident.

37. On seeing them in that plight and on hearing the news, Śiva, an adept in sports became very angry.

38. He issued directives to Indra and other gods, to the Gaṇas led by the six-faced Kumāra and to goblins, ghosts and spirits.

39. At the bidding of Śiva they all desired to kill Gaṇeśa. Lifting up their weapons in a suitable manner they came there from all directions.

40. Whatever weapon they had was hurled on Gaṇeśa with force.

41. There was a great hue and cry in all the three worlds consisting of the mobile and immobile. The inhabitants of the worlds were in a great fix and uncertainty.

42. "Brahmā's life span is not over, but the whole universe is undergoing untimely destruction. Certainly it is due to Śiva's wish.

43. The sixfaced deity and the other gods who came there failed to use their weapons effectively. They were very much surprised.

44. In the meantime, goddess, the mother of the universe, of special knowledge, came to know of the entire incident and was very furious.

45. O great sage, the goddess created two Śaktis[166] then and there for the assistance of her own Gaṇa.

46. O great sage, one Śakti assumed a very fierce form and stood there opening her mouth as wide as the cavern of a dark mountain.

47. The other assumed the form of lightning. She wore many arms. She was a huge and terrible goddess ready to punish the wicked.

48. The weapons hurled by the gods and the Gaṇas were caught in the mouth and hurled back at them.

49. None of the weapons of the gods was seen anywhere around the iron club of Gaṇeśa. This wonderful feat was performed by them.

50. A single boy stirred and churned the vast impassable army in the same manner as great mountain[167] churned the ocean of milk formerly.

51. Indra and other gods were struck by him, single-handed. The Gaṇas of Śiva became agitated and distressed then.

52. Gasping frequently for their breath, being utterly

166. One is the terrible aspect of the Goddess personified as Kālī, Caṇḍī and Bhairavī, the other a beautiful yellow form named Durgā with several hands and riding on a tiger in a fierce and minacing attitude.

167. The term 'girivara' the best of the mountain refers to the fabulous mountain Meru that was used for churning the ocean.

shaken by his blows they gathered together and spoke to one another.

The gods and Gaṇas said:—

53. "What shall be done? Where should we go? The ten directions have become visible. He is whirling the iron club right and left."

Brahmā said:—

54-55. In the meantime the excellent nymphs came there with flowers and sandal paste in their hands. You and other gods who were eager to witness the fight came there. O excellent sage, the excellent pathway of the firmament was entirely filled by them.

56. Seeing the battle they were much surprised. Such a battle had never been witnessed by them before.

57. The earth with all the oceans quaked. As a result of the violent battle even mountains fell down.

58. The sky whirled with the planets and the stars. Everything was agitated. The gods fled. The Gaṇas too did likewise.

59. The valorous sixfaced deity alone did not flee. The great warrior stopped everyone and stood in front.

60. But the Gaṇas fought in vain with the two Śaktis. The weapons of the gods and the Gaṇas were broken and hence withdrawn by them.

61. Those that tarried went to Śiva. All the gods and Gaṇas fled.

62. Those who went in a body to Śiva bowed to him again and again and asked Śiva immediately "O lord who is that excellent Gaṇa?"

63. We have heard that battles used to be fought formerly. Even now many battles are being fought. But never was such a battle seen or heard.

64. O lord, let this be pondered over a little. Otherwise no victory is possible. O lord, you alone are the saviour of the universe. There is no doubt about it."

Brahmā said:—

65. On hearing their words, the furious Rudra became

more furious and went there along with his Gaṇas.

66. The entire army of the gods along with the discus-bearing Viṣṇu shouted in jubilation and followed Śiva.

67. In the meantime, bowing to Śiva, the lord of the gods with palms joined in reverence, O Nārada, you spoke as follows.

Nārada said :—

68. "O lord of the gods, please listen to my words. You are the all-pervading lord and expert in various sports.

69. By indulging in a great sport, the arrogance of the Gaṇas has been removed by you. O Śaṅkara, the impudence of the gods too has been removed by giving this (Gaṇeśa) much strength.

70. O lord Śiva, your own wonderful strength has been known to the worlds, you who independently remove the haughtiness of everyone.

71. O lord who are favourably disposed to your devotees, do not indulge in that sport. Please honour your own Gaṇas and the gods suitably and make them flourish.

72. O bestower of the region of Brahman, please do not treat him leisurely but kill him in your play now." O Nārada, after saying this, you vanished from the place.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

(The head of Gaṇeśa is chopped off during the battle)

Brahmā said:—

1. O Nārada, on hearing your words, the great lord who grants benediction to his devotees became desirous of fighting with the boy.

2. He called Viṣṇu and consulted him. Then with a great army and the gods, He, the three-eyed lord, stood face to face with him.

3. After remembering the lotuslike feet of Śiva, the

gods possessing great strength, kindly glanced at by Śiva and highly jubilant, fought with him.

4. Viṣṇu of great strength, valour and skill and possessing great divine weapons and Śivā's form fought with him.

5. Gaṇeśa hit all the chief gods with his staff. He hit Viṣṇu too, all of a sudden. The hero had been conferred great strength by the Śaktis.

6. O sage, all the gods including Viṣṇu were hit by him with the stick. They were turned back with their strength sapped.

7. O sage, after fighting for a long time along with the army and seeing him terrific, even Śiva was greatly surprised.

8. Thinking within himself "He has to be killed only by deception and not otherwise" he stayed in the midst of the army.

9-10. When lord Śiva who though devoid of attributes had assumed the attributive form was seen in the battle, when Viṣṇu too had come thither, the gods and Gaṇas of Śiva were highly delighted. They joined together and became jubilant.

11. Then Gaṇeśa the heroic son of Śakti following the course of heroes, at first worshipped (i.e struck) Viṣṇu with his staff, Viṣṇu who confers happiness to all.

12-13. "I shall cause him delusion. Then let him be killed by you, O lord. Without deception he cannot be killed. He is of Tāmasika nature and inaccessible." Thinking thus and consulting Śiva, Viṣṇu secured Śiva's permission and was engaged in the activities of delusion.

14. O sage, on seeing Viṣṇu in that manner, the two Śaktis handed over their power to Gaṇeśa and became submerged.

15. When the two Śaktis became submerged, Gaṇeśa with more strength infused in him hurled the iron club in the place where Viṣṇu stood.

16. Viṣṇu strenuously dodged the same after remembering Śiva, the great lord, favourably disposed towards His devotees.

17. Seeing his face on a side, the infuriated Śiva took up his trident with a desire to fight and came there.

18. Pārvatī's son of great strength and heroism, saw

Śiva arrived there with desire to fight him to a finish, the great lord with the trident in his hand.

19. Gaṇeśa, the great hero, who had been rendered more powerful by Pārvatī and the Śaktis remembered the lotuslike feet of his mother and struck him in his hand with his Śakti.

20. Thereupon the trident fell from the hand of Śiva of supreme soul. Seeing this, Śiva the source of great enjoyment and protection took up his bow Pināka.

21. Gaṇeśa felled that to the ground by means of his iron club. Five of his hands too were struck. He took up the trident with the other five hands.

22. "Alas, this has been more distressing even to me. What may not happen to the Gaṇas ? Śiva who followed the worldly conventions cried out like this.

23. In the meantime the heroic Gaṇeśa endowed with the surplus power bestowed by the Śaktis struck the gods and the Gaṇas with his iron club.

24. The gods and the Gaṇas smothered by that wonderful striker with the iron club went away to the ten directions. None of them remained in the battlefield.

25-27. On seeing Gaṇeśa, Viṣṇu said —"He is blessed. He is a great hero of great strength. He is valorous and fond of battle. Many gods, Dānavas, Daityas, Yakṣas, Gandharvas, and Rākṣasas I have seen. In the entire extent of the three worlds, none of them can equal Gaṇeśa in regard to brilliance, form, features, valour and other qualities."

28. Gaṇeśa, son of the Śaktis whirled the iron club and hurled it at Viṣṇu even as he was saying so.

29. After remembering the lotus-like feet of Śiva, Viṣṇu took up his discus and split the iron club by means of discus.

30. Gaṇeśa hurled the piece of iron club at Viṣṇu which was caught by the bird Garuḍa and rendered futile.

31. Thus for a long time the two heroes Viṣṇu and Gaṇeśa fought with each other.

32. Again the foremost among heroes, the son of Pārvatī took up his staff of unrivalled power remembering Śiva and struck Viṣṇu with it.

33. Struck with that unbearable blow he fell on the ground. But he got up, quickly and fought with Pārvatī's son.

34. Securing this opportunity, the Trident-bearing deity came there and cut off his head with his trident.

35. O Nārada, when the head of Gaṇeśa was cut off, the armies of the gods and the Gaṇas stood still.

36. You, Nārada, then came and acquainted Pārvatī with the matter—"O proud woman, listen. You shall not cast off your pride and prestige."

37. O Nārada, saying this, you, fond of quarrels, vanished from there. You are the unchanging sage and a follower of the inclinations of Śiva.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

(*The Resuscitation of Gaṇeśa*)

Nārada said:—

1. O Brahmā, of great intellect, please narrate. When the entire news was heard what did the great goddess Pārvatī do? I wish to hear all in fact.

Brahmā said:—

2. O foremost among sages, listen. I shall mention the story of the mother of the universe in the manner that it happened afterwards.

3. When Gaṇeśa was killed, the Gaṇas were very jubilant. They played on Mṛdaṅgas and Paṭahas.

4. After cutting off the head of Gaṇeśa even as Śiva became sorry, goddess Pārvatī became furious, O great sage.

5. "O what shall I do? Where shall I go? Alas, great misery has befallen me. How can this misery, this great misery be dispelled now?

6. "My son has been killed by all the gods and the Gaṇas. I shall destroy them all or create a deluge."

7. Lamenting thus, the great goddess of all the worlds angrily created in a moment hundreds and thousands of Śaktis.

8. Śaktis who were thus created, bowed to Pārvatī,

the mother of the universe and blazing brilliantly spoke—"O mother, be pleased to command."

9. O great sage, on hearing that, Pārvatī, the Śakti of Śiva, the Prakṛti, the great Māyā, spoke to them all in great fury.

The goddess said:—

10. O Śaktis, O goddesses, now a great deluge shall be created by you at my bidding. You need not hesitate in this regard.

11. "O friends, devour forcibly all these sages, gods, Yakṣas, Rākṣasas belonging to us and others."

Brahmā said:—

12. On being commanded by her, the infuriated Śaktis got ready to destroy the gods and others.

13. Just as the fire consumes dry grass so also these Śaktis attempted to destroy.

14-15. Leaders of Gaṇas or Viṣṇu, Brahmā or Śiva, Indra or Kubera, Skanda or the Sun—Śaktis began to destroy them. Wherever one looked, Śaktis were present.

16. Karālīs (the Terrific), Kubjakās (the hump-backed), Khañjās (the lame), Lambaśīrṣās (the tall-headed) the innumerable Śaktis took up the gods with their hands and threw them in their own mouths.

17-18. On seeing that Śiva, Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Indra, the other gods, Gaṇas and the sages began to doubt what the Goddess Pārvatī would be doing, whether she would create an untimely dissolution. Their hopes and aspirations for life were quelled.

19. They all gathered together and discussed—"What shall be done now? Let us ponder." Discussing thus they spoke to one another.

20. "Only when the goddess Pārvatī is pleased can there be a relief; not otherwise, even with our maximum efforts.

21. Even Śiva who is an expert in different sports and is deluding us all, seems distressed like an ordinary man.

22. When the hips of all the gods are broken and Pārvatī is fiery in rage, none of them dare stand before her.

23-24. Whether a person belonging to her or to others, whether a god, a demon, a Gaṇa, a guardian of the quarters, a Yakṣa, a Kinnara, a Sage, Brahmā, Viṣṇu or even lord Śiva himself, none could stand before Śiva.

25. On seeing her dazzling brilliance, burning all round, all of them were frightened and they stayed far away.

26. In the meantime, O sage Nārada, you of divine vision came there for the happiness of the gods and Gaṇas.

27. After bowing to me, Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva and discussing jointly, he said—"Let us think and act together."

28. The gods then discussed with you of noble soul "How could our misery be quelled." They then said.

29. As long as the goddess Pārvatī does not favour us there will be no happiness. No suspicion need be entertained in this matter.

30. You and other sages went to Pārvatī in order to appease her anger. They then propitiated her.

31. They bowed to her again and again. They eulogised her with many hymns. They tried to please her with devotion and at the behest of the gods and Gaṇas spoke thus.

The celestial sages said:—

32. O Mother of the universe, obeisance to you. Obeisance to you, O Śivā. Obeisance to you. O Caṇḍikā. Obeisance to you, Kalyāṇī.

33. O mother, you alone are the primordial Śakti. You are the eternal cause of creation. You alone are the sustaining power. You alone are the cause of dissolution.

34. O goddess, be pleased. Spread peace. Obeisance be to you. O goddess, the three worlds are agitated by your fury.

Brahmā said :—

35. The great goddess Pārvatī thus eulogised by you

and other sages glanced at them furiously. She did not say anything.

36. Then the sages bowed at her lotus like feet and spoke to her in low voice with devotion joining their palms in reverence.

The sages said:—

37. O goddess, forgive, forgive. The final dissolution seems near at hand. Your lord is standing here. O mother, you see him.

38. What are we, the gods, Viṣṇu, Brahmā and others? We are only your subjects. We stand here with palms joined in reverence.

39. O great goddess, our guilts shall be forgiven. We are agitated and distressed. O Pārvatī give us peace.

Brahmā said:—

40. After saying this, the agitated and distressed sages stood in front of her with palms joined in reverence.

41. On hearing their words Pārvatī was pleased and she replied to the sages with her mind full of compassion.

The goddess said:—

42-43. If my son regains life there may not be further annihilation. If you can arrange for him an honourable status and position among you as the chief presiding officer, there may be peace in the world. Otherwise you will never be happy.

Brahmā said:—

44. Thus warned, you and other sages returned and intimated to all the gods everything in detail.

45. On hearing that, Indra and other gods joined their palms in reverence and piteously intimated to Śiva what had transpired there.

46. On hearing what the gods said, Śiva spoke thus—"It shall be done accordingly so that there may be peace over all the worlds."

47. "You shall go to the northern direction and what-

ever person you meet at first you cut off his head and fit it to this body."

Brahmā said: —

48. Then they carried out Śiva's behests and acted accordingly. They brought the headless body of Gaṇeśa and washed it well.

49. They paid homage to it and started towards the north. It was a single-tusked elephant that they met.

50-51. They took the head and fitted it to the body. After joining it, the gods bowed to Śiva, Viṣṇu and Brahmā and spoke—"What has been ordered by you has been carried out by us. Let the task left incomplete be performed now."

52. Then the Pārṣadas shone happily. After hearing those words they awaited eagerly what Śiva would say.

53. Then Brahmā, Viṣṇu and other gods spoke after bowing to lord Śiva who is free from the ill effects of the attributes.

54. They said :—"Since we all are born out of your brilliant Energy let that Energy come into it by the recitation of the Vedic mantras.

55. Saying so, they jointly sprinkled the holy water, invoked by the mantras on that body after remembering Śiva.

56. Immediately after the contact of the holy water the boy was resuscitated to life and joined with consciousness. As Śiva willed, the boy woke up as from a sleep.

57. He was handsome, extremely comely. He had the face of an elephant. He was red-complexioned. He was delighted with face beaming. He was brilliant and had fine features.

58. O great sage, on seeing the son of Pārvatī resuscitated to life, they all rejoiced and their miseries came to an end.

59. They showed him delightfully to the goddess. On seeing her restored to life, the goddess was greatly delighted.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

(*Gaṇeśa crowned as the chief of Gaṇas*)

Nārada said :—

1. O lord of subjects, when the son of Pārvatī was resuscitated and seen by the goddess, what happened then? Please narrate to me now.

Brahmā said:—

2. O great sage, when the son of Pārvatī was resuscitated and seen by the goddess, listen to what happened there. I shall narrate the jubilation that ensued.

3. O sage, that son of Pārvatī was resuscitated. He was free from distress and perturbation. Then he was crowned by the gods and the leaders of Gaṇas.

4. On seeing her son, Pārvatī was highly delighted. Taking him up with both her hands she embraced him joyously.

5. She then lovingly gave him different clothes and ornaments.

6. He was honoured by the goddess who bestowed all Siddhis on him and touched him with her hand that removes all distress.

7. After worshipping her son, and kissing his face, she granted him boons with affection and said—"You have had great distress since your very birth.

8. You are blessed and contented now. You will receive worship before all the gods. You will be free from distress.

9. Vermillion is visible on your face now. Hence you will be worshipped with vermillion by all men always.

10-12. All achievements certainly accrue to him who performs your worship with flowers, sandal paste, scents, auspicious food offerings Nīrājana rites, betel leaves, charitable gifts, circumambulations and obeisance. All kinds of obstacles will certainly perish.

13. After sayihg this, she worshipped her good son with various articles, once again.

14. O Brahmin, then with the graceful blessings of

Pārvatī, instantly peace reigned upon gods and particularly on the Gaṇas.

15. In the meantime, Indra and other gods eulogised and propitiated Śiva joyously and brought him devoutly near Pārvatī.

16. After pleasing her they placed the boy in her lap for the happiness of the three worlds.

17. Placing his lotus-like hand on his head, Śiva told the gods. "This is another son of mine."

18-19. Getting up and bowing to Śiva, Pārvatī, Viṣṇu and me, Gaṇeśa stood in front of Nārada and other sages and said—"My guilt shall be forgiven. Arrogance is the characteristic of Man's nature."

20. We three Śiva, Viṣṇu and I said to the gods simultaneously with pleasure, after granting him excellent boons

21. "O great gods, just as we three are worshipped in all the three worlds, so also he shall be worshipped by all of you."

22. We are the offsprings of primordial nature. He is also the same and hence worthy of worship. He is the remover of all obstacles and the bestower of the fruits of all rites.

23. He shall be worshipped first and we shall be worshipped afterwards. If he is not worshipped, we too are not worshipped.

24. If the other deities are worshipped when he is not worshipped, the fruit of that rite will be lost. There is no doubt in this matter.

25-26. After saying this we worshipped him. Śiva worshipped Gaṇeśa with various articles of worship. Viṣṇu worshipped him afterwards. I, Brahmā, and Pārvatī too worshipped him. He was then worshipped by all the gods and Gaṇas with great joy.

27. In order to gratify Pārvatī, Gaṇeśa was proclaimed as the presiding officer by all, Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Śiva and others.

28. Again, with a joyful mind, several boons were granted by Pārvatī to him, always favourable to all in the world.

Śiva said :—

29. "O son of Pārvatī, I am pleased, there is no doubt about it. When I am pleased the entire universe is pleased. None will be against the same.

30. Since, even as a boy you showed great valour as Pārvatī's son, you will remain brilliant and happy always.

31. Let your name be the most auspicious in the matter of quelling obstacles. Be the presiding officer of all my Gaṇas and worthy of worship now."

32. After saying this, Śiva laid down several modes of worship and granted benedictions instantaneously.

33. The gods, the Gaṇas and the celestial damsels sang songs joyously, danced and played on instruments.

34. Another boon was granted to Gaṇeśa by the delighted Śiva of great soul.

35-37. O Gaṇeśa, you are born in the first Prahara on the fourth day in the dark half of the Bhādra mouth at the auspicious hour of the moonrise. Since your form manifested itself from the good mind of Pārvatī, your excellent Vrata shall be performed on that Tithi itself or beginning from that day. It will be very auspicious and conducive to the achievement of all Siddhis.

38. At the bidding of us both the Vrata shall be performed till the fourth day at the end of a year.

39. Let those who yearn for unequalled happiness in the world worship you devoutly in various ways on the fourth day in accordance with the rules.

40. On the fourth day of Lakṣmī in the month of Mārgaśīrṣa he shall perform early morning ablution and entrust the Vrata to the brahmins.

41. He shall perform worship with the Dūrvā grass and observe fast. After a Prahara has elapsed in the night the devotee shall take bath and worship.

42-43. The idol shall be made of metal, coral, white Arka flowers or clay. It shall be installed and worshipped by the devotee with all purity, with scents of various kinds, divine sandal paste and flowers.

44-45. A handful of Dūrvā grass having three knots and without roots shall be used for worship. The shoots shall be hundred and one in number. With twentyone the

idol shall be worshipped. Gaṇeśa shall be adored with incense, lamps and different kinds of food-offerings.

46. After worshipping you with various articles of worship like betel etc. and eulogising you with hymns, the devotee shall worship the crescent moon.

47. Afterwards, he shall feed the brahmins joyously with sweets with due honour. He himself shall take sweets and avoid salt.

48. Then the rites shall formally be dismissed. Then he shall remember Gaṇeśa. Thus the Vrata shall be concluded auspiciously.

49. When thus the Vrata is duly completed in a year, the devotee shall perform the rite of formal dismissal for the completion of the Vrata.

50. At my bidding twelve brahmins shall be fed. After placing a jar your image shall be worshipped.

51. After making the eight-petalled lotus diagram on the ground in accordance with Vedic injunctions a sacrifice shall be performed by the liberal people who have no disinclination to spend money.

52. Two women and two students shall be worshipped and fed in front of the idol duly.

53. The devotee shall keep awake at night and perform worship in the morning. After that the rites of formal dismissal with the mantra "Kṣemāya Punarāgamanāya Ca." (For welfare and return again) shall be performed.

54. The benediction as well as good wishes shall be received from the boy. In order to make the Vrata complete, handfuls of flowers shall be offered.

55. After prostrations, various routines shall be carried on. He who performs Vratas like this can secure the desired fruits.

56. O Gaṇeśa, he who performs your worship upto his ability, with faith, shall derive the fruit of all desires.

57. The devotee shall worship you, the lord of Gaṇas with vermillion, sandal paste, raw rice grains and Ketaka flowers as well as with other services.

58. They who devoutly worship you with acts of service will achieve success. Their obstacles will be quelled.

59. These Vratas shall be performed by the people

of all castes, particularly by women as well as kings aiming and beginning to be prosperous and flourishing.

60. He will certainly derive whatever he desires. Hence you shall always be served by him whoever he is who desires fruits.

Brahmā said:—

61-62. When this was mentioned by Śiva to Gaṇeśa of great soul, O sage, the gods, the sages and the Gaṇas, favourites of Śiva said "So be it" and worshipped Gaṇeśa according to prescribed rules.

63. All the Gaṇas, particularly bowed to Gaṇeśa and adored him respectfully with various articles.

64. O great sage, how can I describe even with my four mouths the indescribable delight of Pārvatī.

65. The divine drums were sounded. The celestial damsels danced. The Gandharva chiefs sang. Flowers were showered upon him.

66. When Gaṇeśa was installed, the whole universe attained peace and normalcy. There was great jubilation. All miseries ended.

67. O Nārada, Pārvatī and Śiva rejoiced in particular. Good and plentiful auspiciousness was conducive to happiness everywhere.

68-69. The gods and the sages, who had come there, returned at the bidding of Śiva praising Pārvatī and Gaṇeśa again and again, eulogising Śiva and saying "O what a battle !"

70. When Pārvatī became free from fury, Śiva and Pārvatī behaved as before.

71. With a desire for the welfare of the worlds, the great deity relaxing in his own soul and engaged in the activities of the devotees conferred different kinds of happiness.

72. Both Viṣṇu and I took leave of Śiva and after paying homage to both Pārvatī and Śiva returned to our abodes.

73. O holy sage Nārada, after singing the glory of Pārvatī and Śiva and taking leave of them you too returned to your abode.

74. Thus requested by you, I have narrated the glorious story of Pārvatī and Śiva along with that of Gaṇeśa with great reverence.

75. Whoever hears this narrative auspiciously with pure mind shall have everything auspicious and be the abode of auspiciousness.

76. The childless will get a son, the indigent wealth; the seeker of a wife will get a wife and the seeker of issues will get children.

77. The sick will regain health; the miserable will have good fortune. The sonless, impoverished, banished wife will be reunited with her husband.

78-79. The sorrowing will be relieved of sorrow, undoubtedly. The house that contains this story shall certainly be auspicious. He who listens to this narrative at the time of travel or on holy occasions, with a pure mind shall get all desires, thanks to the grace of lord Gaṇeśa.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

(*Gaṇapati's marriage*)

Nārada said:—

1. O dear father, the excellent story of the nativity and the divine conduct embellished by valour, of Ganeśa has been heard well.

2. O dear father, O lord of gods, what happened thereafter ? Please narrate it. The great glory of Pārvatī and Śiva confers great delight.

Brahmā said:—

3. O excellent sage, you have asked well with a sympathetic mind. Listen attentively, O excellent sage, I shall narrate.

4. O excellent brahmin, seeing frequently the divine sports of both the sons, Pārvatī and Śiva had their love increased.

5. The happiness of the parents knew no bounds. The son too used to sport in joy and love.

6. O great sage, the sons rendered great service to their parents with great devotion.

7. The love and affection of the parents towards the six-faced lord and Gaṇeśa increased to a great extent like the moon in the bright half of the month.

8. O celestial sage, once the loving parents Pārvatī and Śiva held a secret talk and discussion.

9. They thought that the two sons had attained to marriageable age and how best their marriage should be celebrated now.

10. The sixfaced lord Kārttikeya was their great beloved son. Gaṇeśa too was likewise. Thinking thus they were worried as well as delighted.

11. O sage, coming to know of their parents' opinion, the sons too were eager to get married.

12. "I shall marry, I shall marry" saying thus to each other they always quarrelled with each other.

13. The couple, the rulers of the worlds, on hearing their words, were very much surprised, following the worldly conventions.

14. A wonderful expedient was devised by them after thinking about the course to be followed in the celebration of their marriage.

15. Once they called the sons to them and spoke as follows.

Śiva and Pārvatī said:—

16. O good sons, we have framed the rules conducive to your happiness. Listen lovingly. We shall tell you the truth.

17. Both of you are good sons and equal in our eyes. There is no difference. Hence a condition that is beneficial to both of you has been made.

18. The auspicious marriage will be celebrated of that boy who comes here first after going round the entire earth.

Brahmā said:—

19. On hearing their words, the powerful Kumāra

started immediately from the fixed point in order to go round the earth.

20. Gaṇeśa of excellent intellect stood there itself after pondering in his mind frequently with his keen intellect.

21. "What shall be done? Where am I to go? I cannot cross the earth. At best it may be possible to go a Krośa. I cannot go beyond it.

22. What avails that happiness which is achieved after going round the earth?" Please listen to what Gaṇeśa did after thinking thus.

23. He performed the ceremonial ablution and returned home. He then spoke to his father and mother.

Gaṇeśa said:—

24. For your worship two seats have I placed here. Please be seated, dear parents. Let my desire be fulfilled.

Brahmā said:—

25. On hearing his words, Pārvatī and Śiva sat on the seats for receiving worship.

26. They were worshipped by him and circumambulated seven times and bowed too seven times.

27. Joining his palms in reverence and eulogising his parents agitated by love and affection, many times, Gaṇeśa the ocean of intelligence, spoke thus.

Gaṇeśa said:—

28. "O mother, O father, you please listen to my weighty words. My auspicious marriage shall be celebrated quickly."

Brahmā said:—

29. On hearing the words of the noble-minded Gaṇeśa, the parents spoke to him, the storehouse of great intellect.

Śiva and Pārvatī said:—

30. You shall circumambulate the earth with all its forests. Kumāra has already gone. You too start and return first.

Brahmā said:—

31. On hearing the words of his parents, Gaṇeśa spoke immediately and furiously but with some restraint.

Gaṇeśa said:—

32. O mother, O father, you two are intelligent and embodied virtue. Hence O excellent ones, you may be pleased to hear my virtuous words.

33. The earth has been circumambulated by me frequently, for seven times. Why then, my parents should say thus?

Brahmā said:—

34. On hearing his words, the sportively inclined parents, following the worldly conventions spoke to him thus—

The parents said:—

35. "O son, when was the great earth circumambulated by you, the earth consisting of seven continents[168] extending to the oceans and consisting of vast jungles?

Brahmā said:—

36. O sage, on hearing the words of Pārvatī and Śiva, Gaṇeśa, the storehouse of great intellect spoke thus.

Gaṇeśa said :—

37. By worshipping you, Pārvatī and Śiva, I have intelligently circumambulated the earth extending to the oceans.

38. Is it not the verdict of the Vedas or the Śāstras or any other sacred code? Is it true or otherwise?

39. "He who worships his parents and circumambulates them, will certainly derive the fruit and merit of circumambulating the earth.

40. He who leaves his parents at home and goes on a pilgrimage incurs the sin of their murder.

168. On the seven continents, see S. M. Ali, Geography of the Purāṇas, Ch. II.

41. The holy centre of a son consists of the lotus-like feet of his parents. The other holy centres can be reached only after going a long distance.

42. This holy centre is near at hand, easily accessible and a means of virtue. For a son and wife, the auspicious holy centre is in the house itself."

43. These things are mentioned frequently in the Śāstras and the Vedas. Now, are they going to be falsified by you?

44. If so, your very forms will come false. Even the Vedas will become false. There is no doubt about it.

45. Let my auspicious marriage be celebrated and that too very quickly. Otherwise let the Vedas and Śāstras be declared false.

46. Of the two alternatives whatever is excellent shall be followed, O parents, embodied virtues!

Brahmā said:—

47. Saying thus, Gāṇeśa of excellent intellect, of great wisdom and foremost among intelligent persons assumed silence.

48. On hearing his words, Pārvatī and Śiva, the rulers of the universe, were very much surprised.

49. Then, Śiva and Pārvatī praised their son who was clever and intelligent and spoke to him who had spoken the truth.

Śiva and Pārvatī said :—

50. O son, you are a supreme soul and your thoughts are pure. What you have said is true and not otherwise.

51. When misfortune comes, if a person is keenly intelligent, his misfortunes perish even as darkness perishes when the sun rises.

52. He who has intelligence possesses strength as well. How can he who is devoid of intellect have strength? The proud lion was drowned in a well with a trick by a little hare.[169]

53. Whatever has been mentioned in the Vedas, Śāstras and Purāṇas for a boy, all that has been performed by you, namely, the observance of virtue.

169. This verse introduces the story of the lion and the hare in the Pañcatantra.

54. What has been executed by you shall be done by anyone. We have honoured it. It will not be altered now.

Brahmā said :—

55. After saying this and appeasing Gaṇeśa, the ocean of intelligence, they resolved to perform his marriage.

CHAPTER TWENTY

(*Th celebration of Gaṇeśa's marriage*)

Brahmā said:—

1. In the meantime Prajāpati Viśvarūpa became delighted and happy on knowing their intention.

2. Prajāpati Viśvarūpa had two daughters of divine features. They were famous as Siddhi and Buddhi.[170] They were exquisite in every part of their body.

3. The lord Śiva and Pārvatī, jubilantly celebrated the marriage of Gaṇeśa with them.

4. The delighted gods attended their marriage as desired by Śiva and Pārvatī.

5. Viśvakarman made all arrangements for the marriage. The sages and the gods were full of great joy.

6. The happiness that Gaṇeśa derived by virtue of this marriage, O sage, cannot be adequately described.

7. After some time, the noble Gaṇeśa begot two sons, one each of his wives. They were endowed with divine features.

8. The son Kṣema was born to Siddhi. The highly brilliant son Lābha was born to Buddhi.

9. While Gāṇeśa was enjoying the inconceivable happiness, the second son returned after circumambulating the earth.

10. Thereupon he was addressed by Nārada, the great soul. "I am speaking the truth, no lies. I am not actuated by deception or rivalry.

11. What has been done by Śiva and Pārvatī your

170. Siddhi and Buddhi were the two daughters of the progenitor Viśvarūpa and these were married to Ganeśa. Siddhi gave birth to Kṣema and Lābha was born of Buddhi.

parents, no other person in the world will ever do. Truth. It is the truth I am speaking.

12. After driving you out under the pretext of circumambulating the earth, they have celebrated the excellent and auspicious marriage of Gaṇeśa.

13. By this marriage that was celebrated, Gaṇeśa has obtained two wives joyously. They are the excellent daughters of Prajāpati Viśvarūpa.

14. He has begot of his two wives of auspicious body two sons, Kṣema of Siddhi and Lābha of Buddhi. They bestow happiness on every one.

15. Begetting two sons of auspicious features of his wives Gaṇeśa is continuously enjoying happiness as conceived by your parents.

16. The entire earth consisting of oceans and jungles has been traversed by you due to their deceptive behest. O dear, this is the result of that.

17. O dear, consider. If parents begin to deceive or particularly if our masters begin to deceive, won't others also begin to deceive.

18. Your parents have not done well. Just ponder over it. I don't think their action has been good.

19. If mother were to poison her son, if father were to sell his son, if the king were to confiscate the assets of his subjects what can be said and to whom ?

20. O dear, an intelligent peace-loving person shall never look at the face of the person who has committed this harmful deed.

21. This policy has been mentioned in the Vedas, Smṛtis and sacred texts. It has been intimated to you now. Do as you wish."

Brahmā said:—

22. O Nārada, following the mental process of lord Śiva, you spoke these words to Kumāra and then kept quiet.

23. After bowing to his father, the infuriated Skanda went to the Krauñca mountain[171] though forbidden by his parents.

171. This famous hill represents part of the Kailāsa on which the Mānasarovara is situated. See Note 78 P. 629.

24. "Even when forbidden by us why do you go?" Although he was prevented by saying this, he went away saying "No".

25. "O parents, I shall not stay here even a moment when deception has been practised on me eschewing affection towards me."

26. O sage, he went away saying so. Even today he is staying there removing the sin of all by his very vision.

27. Ever since that day, O celestial sage, the son of Śiva, Kārttikeya remains a bachelor.

28. His name bestows auspiciousness in the world. It is famous in the three worlds. It dispels all sins, is meritorious and confers the sanctity of celibacy.

29. In the month of Kārttika, the gods, the holy sages and great ascetics go there to see Kumāra.

30. He who has the vision of the lord in the Kṛttikā Nakṣatra in the month of Kārttika is divested of all sins. He derives all desired fruits.

31. Pārvatī became grief-stricken by separation from Skanda. She piteously told her lord. "O lord, let us go there."

32. Śiva went to that mountain partially for her happiness. He assumed the pleasing form of Jyotirliṅga named Mallikārjuna.[172]

33. Even now Śiva is seen there with Pārvatī satisfying the desires of his devotees. He is the goal of the good.

34. On coming to know that Śiva had come there with Pārvatī, Kumāra became unattached and was eager to go elsewhere.

35. On being requested by the gods and sages he stayed in a place three Yojanas away.

36. O Nārada, on the full and new moon days, Pārvatī and Śiva are excited by love towards their son and they go there to see him.

37. On new moon days, Śiva himself goes there. On full moon days, Pārvatī goes there certainly.

172. According to the present context the Mallikārjuna Jyotirliṅga was established on the Krauñca mountain. It is difficult to know how it came to be identified with the one on Śrīśaila overhanging the Kṛṣṇā river in the south.

38. O great sage, whatever you had asked in regard to Kārttikeya and Gaṇeśa has been narrated by me.

39. On hearing this, an intelligent man becomes free from all sins. He achieves all desired fruits of auspicious nature.

40. Whoever reads, teaches, listens or narrates this story derives all desires. No doubt need be entertained in this respect.

41. A brahmin derives brahminical splendour, a Kṣatriya becomes victorious, a Vaiśya prosperous and a Śūdra attains equality with the good.

42. A sick man becomes free from sickness; a frightened man becomes free from fear; no man is harassed by the visitation of goblins, ghosts etc.

43. This narrative is sinless, conducive to glory and enhancer of happiness. It is conducive to longevity and attainment of heaven. It is unequalled and bestows sons and grandsons.

44. It confers salvation and reveals Śiva's principles. It is pleasing to Pārvatī and Śiva and increases devotion to Śiva.

45. This shall always be heard by devotees and by those who seek liberation and are free from worldly desires. It confers identity with Śiva. It is conducive to welfare and is identical with Śiva himself.

RUDRA-SAMHITĀ

SECTION V

Yuddha Khaṇḍa

CHAPTER ONE

Description of the Tripuras[173]

Nārada said :—

1. The excellent story of the householder Śiva, including that of Gaṇeśa, Skanda and others which confers bliss has been heard by us.

2. Now please narrate lovingly the story of how Śiva killed wicked persons playfully.

3. How did the lord burn off three cities of the Asuras with a single arrow simultaneously? What sort of an arrow was it?

4. Please narrate the story of the moon-crested lord conducive to the happiness of the gods and sages and a play of the magic of Śiva.

Brahmā said:—

5. When he was asked by Vyāsa formerly, the excellent

173. According to the present version, three Asuras Tāraka, Vidyunmāli and Kamalākṣa performed penances and obtained a boon from Brahmā to build three castles, the one of copper on earth, another of silver in the sky and the third of gold. Brahmā asked the Asura Maya to build these castles for the Asuras which were destroyed by Śiva later on. According to another Version, the Asura Bāṇa received in gift three cities from Śiva, Brahmā and Viṣṇu.

The Chedis adopted the name Tripurī for their capital on the banks of the Narmadā. It is now traceable in the insignificant village Tewar, thirteen miles from Jabalpur.

The legend of the three cities is as old as the Brāhmaṇa literature. It is said that the Asuras built the city of copper on the earth, of silver in the sky and of gold in the heavenly region : देवाश्च वा असुराश्च उभये प्राजापत्याः पस्पर्धिरे। ततोऽसुरा एषु लोकेषु पुरश्चक्रिरे अयस्मयी-मेवास्मिन् लोके रजतमयीमन्तरिक्षे हरिणीं दिवि। ŚB. 3. 4. 4. 3.

sage Sanatkumāra narrated the story. I will repeat the same.

Sanatkumāra said: —

6. O Vyāsa of great intellect, listen to the story of the moon-crested lord, how the annihilator of the universe burnt the three cities with a single arrow.

7. O great sage, when the Asura Tāraka was killed by Skanda, the son of Śiva, his three sons performed austerities.

8. The eldest of them was Tārakākṣa, the middle one Vidyunmālī and the youngest Kamalākṣa. All of them were of equal strength.

9. They were self-controlled, well prepared, disciplined, truthful, of steady mind, heroic and inimical to the gods.

10. Eschewing all enjoyments captivating the mind, they went to the cavern of the mountain Meru[174] and performed a wonderful penance.

11. The three sons of Tāraka eschewed all desires in the season of spring. They disdained music, the sound of instruments as well as jubilation and performed penances.

12. In the summer season they mastered sunshine. They lighted fires in all directions. Standing in their midst they performed sacrifice with great devotion for the attainment of success.

13. They lay unconscious in the blazing sunshine. During the rainy season, they fearlessly bore all the showers on their heads.

14-15. In the autumn they controlled their hunger and thirst. All good foodstuffs, steady, wholesome, and viscid, fruits, roots and beverages they distributed among the hungry. They themselves remained like stones.

16. In the early winter they remained on top of the mountain with fortitude, unsupported in any of the four quarters.

17. In the late winter they stayed under water or wore wet dripping silken cloth or allowed themselves to be covered with dew drops.

174. For the Mountain Meru, see Note 247 P. 310 and Note 64 P. 623.

18. They were not at all vexed or distressed thereby. They gradually increased the severity of their austerities. Thus the three excellent sons of Tāraka performed penance with Brahmā as the object of their worship.

19. Maintaining strict severity in their austerities, the excellent Asuras made their bodies emaciated by their penance.

20. Standing on the bare ground on a single foot, the strong Asuras performed the penance for a hundred years.

21. Taking in only air and enduring excessive heat and distress, the terrible and wicked souls continued the penance for a thousand years.

22. They remained standing on their heads for a thousand years. They remained standing with their arms lifted for hundred years.

23. Thus they bore extreme distress in their tenacious evil intent. They remained alert day and night.

24. O sage, thus many years elapsed even as they performed the penance. I think they had a virtuous dedication of their souls in Brahmā, these sons of Tāraka.

25. Satisfied by their penance, Brahmā the supreme lord of the gods and Asuras, of great glory, appeared in front of them in order to grant them boons.

26. He was accompanied by sages, gods and Asuras. The grandfather of all living beings spoke to them thus, appeasing them.

Brahmā said:—

27. O great Asuras, I am now pleased with your penance. I shall grant you everything. Speak out the boons you wish to have.

28. O enemies of the gods, tell me why you have been performing this penance. I am the bestower of the fruits of all sorts of penance. I am the creator of everything for ever.

Sanatkumāra said: –

29. On hearing his words they bowed to the grandfather, with their palms joined in reverence and spoke to him revealing their mind's desire slowly.

The Asuras said:—

30. O lord of gods, if you are pleased, if boons are to be given to us, please grant us indestructibility at the hands of everyone, every living being.

31. O lord of the universe, make us steady. Protect us from enemies. Let not old age, sickness and death befall us at any time.

32. We wish to become free from old age and death. In the three worlds we shall subject all others to death.

33. Of what avail are riches, vast earth, excellent cities, other sorts of vast enjoyments or big positions and power ?

34. If one is to be swallowed by death in five days, O Brahmā, everything else belonging to him is futile. This is our decisive thought.

Sanatkumāra said:—

35. On hearing the words of those ascetic Asuras, Brahmā replied to them after remembering Śiva, his lord.

Brahmā said:—

36. O Asuras, there cannot be invariable indestructibility. Please desist from asking for it. Seek some other boon whatever you wish.

37. O Asuras, a creature is born, dies and will be born surely. But no one will be free from old age or death in this world.

38. Except Śiva the destroyer of Death, and Viṣṇu all else are mortals. These two are the supervisers of virtue and evil and have manifest and unmanifest forms.

39. If penance is performed for the harassment of the world, it shall be understood as gone. It is only a well-performed penance that can be fruitful.

40. Ponder over this keenly, O faultless ones, desist from seeking immortality. Immortality is impossible for the gods and the Asuras. It is inaccessible. It cannot be warded off.

41. Hence choose a boon whereby you shall do something equal to your own strength.[175]

175. The original of this translation is defective.

Sanatkumāra said:—

42. On hearing the words of Brahmā, they thought for a while and then replied to the grandfather of all the worlds.

The Asuras said:—

43. O lord, we have no mansion where we can stay happily although we are valorous and invincible to our enemies.

44. Build and give us three wonderful cities richly endowed with wealth and unassailable even to the gods.

45. O Preceptor of the universe, Lord of the worlds, by your grace we shall move about on the earth occupying these cities.

46. Tārakākṣa then said—"Let Viśvakarmā make a city which cannot be broken even by the gods. Let that golden city be mine".

47. Kamalākṣa requested for a great silver city. The delighted Vidyunmālī requested for a steel-set magnetic city.

48-50. We will join together during midday at the time of Abhijit when the moon shall be in the constellation Puṣya, when the dark clouds Puṣkara and Āvarta[176] shower in plenty without being visible in the firmament with sporting clouds, at the end of a thousand years. These cities shall never join otherwise.

51-53. O Brahmā, when these cities are joined together, the lord who embodies all the gods sitting in a wonderful chariot containing all necessary adjuncts, may, in his distorted sport, discharge a wonderful single arrow and pierce our cities. Lord Śiva is free from enmity with us. He is worthy of our worship and respect. How can he burn us? This is what we think in our minds. A person like him is difficult to get in the world.

Sanatkumāra said:—

54. On hearing their words, Brahmā, the grandfather

176. Puṣkara and Āvarta : A class o clouds that rain in torrents at the dissolution of the world.

and creator of the worlds remembered Śiva and told them "Let it be so."

55. He ordered Maya[177]—"O Maya, build three cities, one of gold, another of silver and a third one of steel."

56. After ordering directly like this, Brahmā returned to his abode in heaven even as the sons of Tāraka were watching.

57-58. Then the intelligent Maya built the cities by means of his penance : the golden one for Tārakākṣa, the silver one for Kamalākṣa and the steel one for Vidyunmālī. The three fortlike excellent cities were in order in heaven, sky and on the earth.

59. After building the three cities for the Asuras, Maya established them there desiring their welfare.

60. Entering the three cities thus, the sons of Tāraka, of great strength and valour experienced all enjoyments.

61. They had many Kalpa trees[178] there. Elephants and horses were in plenty. There were many palaces set with gems.

62. Aerial chariots shining like the solar sphere, set with Padmarāga stones, moving in all directions looking like moonshine illuminated the cities.

63-64. There were many palaces, divine minarets resembling the summits of the mount Kailāsa. Celestial damsels, Gandharvas, Siddhas, and Cāraṇas were also there. There were temples of Rudra. In every house, people performed the rites of Agnihotra. There were excellent brahmins wellversed in sacred texts aud devoted to Śiva always.

65-66. The cities were embellished with many trees in the well-laid out gardens and parks as if they had dropped from heaven. There were beautiful tanks, lakes, wells, rivers and huge ponds. They were very beautiful with plenty of fruit-bearing trees.

67. The cities were decorated with camps and tents of various sizes and chariots with beautiful horses. There were herds of elephants in rut too.

68. There were time-indicators, playgrounds and different halls for Vedic studies.

177. Maya : an Asura artificer of the Daityas

178. Kalpadruma: It is one of the five trees of Indra's Paradise fabled to fulfil all desires.

69. There were persons of various types—sinners, virtuous, pious, noble and those of good conduct too.

70. The place was sanctified everywhere by chaste ladies engaged in serving their husbands and averse to evil practices.

71. The cities contained heroic Asuras of great fortune accompanied by their wives, sons and brahmins well versed in the principles and practices of the Vedic and Smārta rites. They were strict adherents to their duties.

72. People had broad chests and bull-like shoulders. Some were of peaceful nature and some of warlike temperament. Some were calm and some furious. Some were hunchbacked. Some were dwarfish.

73. They were protected by Maya. Some had the blue-lily petals. Their hair was curly and dark in hue. Maya had instructed them in the arts of warfare.

74. The cities abounded in people engaged in terrific battles. There were many Asuras whose heroism was sanctified by the worship of Brahmā and Śiva. The Asuras resembled the sun, the Maruts and Mahendra. They were sturdy.

75. Whatever sacred rites are mentioned in Śāstras, Vedas and Purāṇas, as favourites of Śiva, as also the deities, favourites of Śiva, were found there.

76. Thus the Asuras, sons of Tāraka, after acquiring the boons, lived there subservient to Maya, a great devotee of Śiva.

77. Abandoning the other parts in the three worlds they entered the cities and ruled the kingdom following the principles of Śiva.

78. O sage, a long time elapsed even as they were engaged in meritorious activities and living happily ruling over the good kingdom.

CHAPTER TWO

(*The Prayer of the gods*)

Vyāsa said:—

1. O son of Brahmā, of great intellect, and most eloquent, please narrate. What happened after that ? How did the gods become happy ?

Brahmā said :—

2. On hearing the words of Vyāsa of immeasurable intellect, Sanatkumāra spoke after remembering the lotus-like feet of Śiva.

Sanatkumāra said:—

3. Indra and other gods scorched by their brilliance and distressed consulted one another and sought refuge in Brahmā.

4. After bowing to and circumambulating Brahmā, they narrated their grievances to him after awaiting the proper opportunity.

The gods said:—

5. O Brahmā, the heaven-dwellers have been subjected to great distress by Maya the virtual ruler of the three cities, accompanied by the sons of Tāraka.

6. Hence, O Brahmā, we are distressed and we seek refuge in you. Please plan out the way of their annihilation whereby we can be happy.

Sanatkumāra said:—

7. Requested thus by the gods, Brahmā, the creator of the worlds laughed and replied to them all who were utterly frightened of Maya.

Brahmā said :—

8. O gods, I tell you, do not be afraid at all of those Asuras. Śiva will hit upon a good way of killing them.

9. The Asuras have flourished due to my favour. They do not deserve destruction at my hands. Their merit is bound to increase in the three cities[179] again.

10. All of you gods including Indra pray to Śiva. If the lord of all is pleased, he will carry out your task.

Sanatkumāra said:—

11. On hearing the words of Brahmā, the distressed gods including Indra went to the place where the bull-bannered god Śiva was staying.

12. Devoutly bowing to Śiva, the lord of the gods, with palms joined in reverence, all of them bent their shoulders and eulogised Śiva, the benefactor of the worlds.

The gods said:—

13. Obeisance to the gold-wombed lord, the creator of everything. Obeisance to Thee, the sustainer, the omnipresent and the omnipotent.

14. Obeisance to Thee of destroyer's form, the annihilator of living beings. Obeisance to Thee devoid of attributes, and of immeasurable splendour.

15. Obeisance to Thee devoid of states, possessed of splendour and free from aberrations; obeisance to Thee of the soul of Great Elements; obeisance to the unsullied, the great Ātman.

16. Obeisance to Thee, the lord of all beings, the sustainer of great burden, the remover of thirst, to Thee whose form is devoid of enmity, to Thee of excessive splendour.

17. Obeisance to Thee, the destroyer of the great forest in the form of great Asuras, like conflagration. Obeisance to the Trident-bearing lord who acts as the axe for the trees of Asuras.

18. O great lord, obeisance to Thee, the destroyer of great Asuras; obeisance to Thee the lord of Pārvatī, O wielder of all weapons.

19. O lord of Pārvatī, Obeisance to Thee, O great soul, O great lord. Obeisance to Thee, the blue-necked Rudra and of the form of Rudra.

179. Tripura: See Note 173. P. 8:2

20. Obeisance to Thee, knowable through Vedānta; Obeisance to Thee who art beyond the paths. Obeisance to Thee of the form of attributes, possessing attributes and also devoid of them.

21. O great god, obeisance to Thee the delighter of the three worlds. Obeisance to Pradyumna, Aniruddha and Vāsudeva (these being your manifestations). Obeisance to Thee.

22. Obeisance to Thee, the lord Saṁkarṣaṇa. Obeisance to Thee the destroyer of Kaṁsa. Obeisance to Thee O Dāmodara, the pounder of Cāṇūra,[180] the partaker of poison.

23. Obeisance to Thee, O lord, Hṛṣīkeśa, Acyuta, Mṛḍa, Śaṅkara, Adhokṣaja, enemy of the Asuras, Gaja and Kāma. Obeisance to you, O partaker of poison.

24. Obeisance to Thee, O lord Nārāyaṇa, devoted to Nārāyaṇa, of the form of Nārāyaṇa, oh ! one born of Nārāyaṇa's body.

25. Obeisance to Thee of all forms, the destroyer of great hells, destroyer of sins. Obeisance to you, O bull-vehicled god.

26. Obeisance to Thee of the form of time, moment etc. Obeisance to Thee who bestows strength on his devotees; obeisance to the multiformed; obeisance to the annihilator of the hosts of Asuras.

27. Obeisance to the lord, conducive to the welfare of brahmins and cows. Obeisance to the thousand-formed, obeisance to Thee of thousand organs.

28. O Śiva, obeisance to Thee of the form of virtue, to the Sattva, to the Ātman of Sattva. Obeisance to thee whose form is knowable through the Vedas. Obeisance to thee, the beloved of the Vedas.

29. Obeisance to Thee whose form is the Veda, obeisance to the reciter of the Vedas. Obeisance to Thee who traversest the path of good conduct and who art approachable through the path of good conduct.

30. Obeisance to Thee the glory-seated; to the Truth-

180. Cāṇūra was a wrestler in Kaṁsa's service. He was slain by Kṛṣṇa.

ful, beloved of truth, to the truth. Obeisance to Thee knowable through the truth.

31. Obeisance to Thee possessed of magic-power, obeisance to the lord of magic; Obeisance to Thee (knowable through the Vedas), to Brahman, to the one born of Brahmā.

32. Obeisance to Thee, O lord, the penance, the bestower of the fruits of penance, obeisance to thee, worthy of eulogy, the eulogy, and to Thee whose mind is pleased with eulogy always.

33. Obeisance to Thee delighted with vedic conduct, to the one fond of praiseworthy conduct; to the one who has fourfold forms and the forms of aquatic and terrestrial beings.

34. O lord, the gods and all others, being excellent, are your excellences. Among the gods you are Indra; among the planets you are the sun.

35. Among the worlds you are Satyaloka. Among the rivers you are the celestial river Gaṅgā. Among the colours you are the white colour. Among the lakes you are the Mānasa lake.

36. Among the mountains you are the Himālaya mountain. Among the cows you are the Kāmadhenu[181]. Among the oceans you are the milk ocean. Among the metals you are gold.

37. Among the four castes you are the brahmin. O Śiva, among men you are the king. Among holy centres of salvation you are Kāśī. Among the sacred rivers you are the supreme sacred river.

38. Among all stones, you are the crystal, O great god, among the flowers you are the lotus; among mountains you are Himavat.

39. Among all activities you are the speech; among poets you are Bhārgava. Among birds you are the eight-legged Śarabha. Among beasts of prey you are the lion.

40. O bull-bannered deity, among rocks you are Śālagrāma; among the forms of worship you are Narmadā Liṅga.

41. Among animals, you are the bull Nandīśvara, O

181. Kāmadhenu, a mythical cow produced at the churning of the ocean, was appropriated by the sage Vasiṣṭha. Her worship is said to fulfil desires.

lord Śiva. Among Vedic texts you are in the form of Upaniṣads; Among the sacrificers you are the cool-rayed moon.

42. Among the burning ones, you are the fire, among the devotees of Śiva, you are Viṣṇu, among Purāṇas you are Bhārata; among the letters of the alphabet you are the letter Ma[182].

43. Among the Bijamantras you are the Praṇava; among the terrible ones you are poison; among the pervading ones you are the firmament; among the Ātmans you are the supreme Ātman.

44. Among the sense-organs you are the mind; among the charitable gifts you are the gift of freedom from fear; among the sanctifying and life-giving agents you are considered the waters.

45. Among all acquisitions you are the acquisition of sons; among those with velocity you are the wind; among the routine sacred rites you are the Sandhyā worship.

46. Among sacrifices you are the horse-sacrifice. Among the Yugas you are the Kṛta yuga; among the asterisms you are Puṣya; among the Tithis you are Amāvāsyā.

47. Among the seasons you are the spring; among holy occasions you are the Saṁkrama; among grasses you are the Kuśa grass; among gross trees you are the Banyan tree.

48. Among the Yogas you are the Vyatīpāta; among creepers you are the Soma creeper; among intellectual activities you are the virtuous inclination, among intimate ones you are the wife.

49. Among the pure activities of the aspirant, O great lord, you are Prāṇāyāma; among all Jyotirliṅgas you are Viśveśvara.

50. Among all kindred beings you are Dharma. In all stages of life you are Sannyāsa. You are the supreme Liberation in all Vargas. Among Rudras you are Nīlalohita.

51. Among all Ādityas you are Vāsudeva; among the monkeys you are Hanumat; among the sacrifices you are Japayajña; among the weapon-bearers you are Rāma:

182. The letter 'M' is considered the best among the letters, as it represents the five requisites for Tantra worship viz: Madya (wine), māṁsa (flesh) Matsya (fish) Mudrā (mystical gesticulations) and Maithuna (sexual intercourse). These are variously interpreted by the right and left hand worshippers of Śakti.

52. Among the Gandharvas you are Citraratha; among the Vasus you are certainly the fire; among the months you are the intercalary month; among the holy rites you are the Caturdaśī rite.

53. Among all lordly elephants you are Airāvata[183]; among all Siddhas you are Kapila; among all serpents you are Ananta, among all Pitṛs you are Aryaman.

54-55. You are Kāla (Time) among those who calculate; among Asuras you are Bali. O lord of gods, of what avail is a detailed narration ? You preside over the entire universe and remain partially stationed within and partially without.

Sanatkumāra said:—

56-57. Eulogising thus the bull-bannered, the trident-bearing lord Śiva with various kinds of divine hymns, the gods replied thus relevant to the context. O sage, all of them including Indra and others were very much distressed. They were very shrewd in managing their selfish interests and so mentioned them to Śiva with stooping shoulders and palms joined in reverence.

The gods said:—

58. O lord Śiva, the gods including Indra have been defeated by the Asura accompanied by his brothers. O lord, all the gods have been defeated by the sons of Tāraka.

59. The three worlds have been brought under their sway. The excellent sages and the Siddhas have been destroyed. The entire universe has been exterminated by them.

60. The terrible Asuras take the entire share of the sacrificial benefits to themselves. They have initiated evil activities. They have prevented the sages from performing their virtuous rites.

61. Definitely the sons of Tāraka cannot be killed by any living being. Hence, O Śiva, they perform everything as they please.

183. Airāvata: He is the elephant produced at the churning of the ocean and appropriated by the God Indra. He is the guardian deity who presides over the east and takes part in the defence and protection of the quarter.

62. Let some policy be laid down for the protection of the universe lest the terrible Asuras, the denizens of the three cities, should destroy the world.

Sanatkumāra said:—

63. On hearing these words of Indra and other heaven-dwellers who were expatiating on their distress, Śiva spoke in return.

CHAPTER THREE

(*The virtues of the Tripuras*)

Śiva said:—

1. A meritorious person is the presiding ruler of the Tripuras now. He who practises meritorious deeds should not be killed by sensible persons.

2. O gods, I know the misery of the gods completely. It is great. Those Asuras are very strong. They cannot be killed by the gods or demons.

3. The sons of Tāraka and Maya are equally meritorious. O sensible ones, they are invincible to all the citizens.

4. How can I knowingly commit malicious deeds to my friends though I am hardy and powerful in battles? Even Brahmā has said that there is a great sin attending on even casual malicious actions.

5. There are ways of atonement and amends for a brahmin slayer, a wine addict, a thief or a person who violates sacred rites. But there is no expiation for ungrateful men

6. Those Asuras are my devotees. O Gods, how can they be slain by us? Let this aspect be thought over by you who know what is virtue. You must consider this virtuously.

7. They should not be slain as long as they continue their devotion to me. Yet, this reason may very well be intimated tŏ Viṣṇu.

Sanatkumāra said:—

8. O sage, thus when they heard these words Indra and other gods immediately intimated this to Brahmā in the first instance.

9. Then, with Brahmā at their head, the gods including Indra quickly went to Vaikuṇṭha in all glory.

10. On going there and seeing Viṣṇu, the gods bowed to him in agitation, and with their palms joined in reverence they eulogised him with great devotion.

11. They intimated to Viṣṇu the powerful, the reasons for their misery, the earlier ones as well as the later.

12. On hearing the distress of the gods as well as the vows observed by the Tripuras, Viṣṇu spoke as follows.

Viṣṇu said:—

13. This is true that where the eternal virtue reigns supreme, no misery raises its head like darkness when the sun is seen.

Sanatkumāra said:—

14. On hearing these words the gods became miserable and dejected. They spoke to Viṣṇu with their lotus-like faces depressed.

The gods said:—

15. How are we to go about our activities. How can our misery be dispelled? How can we be happy? How are we to remain firm?

16. As long as the Tripuras are alive, how can we observe virtuous activities? All the residents of the three cities give troubles to us.

17. What else can we say to you? Either the annihilation of the Tripuras shall be made or the untimely destruction of the gods shall be proceeded with.

Sanatkumāra said:—

18. After saying this and lamenting frequently, the gods were in a fix and could neither stay nor leave the proximity of Viṣṇu.

19-21. On seeing them in that plight, distressed and

humiliated, Viṣṇu thought within himself, "I am the benefactor of the gods. But what can I do in this affair? The sons of Tāraka are the devotees of Śiva." After thinking like this, he thought upon the Supreme Viṣṇu, the lord of sacrifices, the primordial Puruṣa.

22. Immediately on being thought upon by Viṣṇu all the sacrifices came where Viṣṇu was stationed.

23. With palms joined in reverence they bowed to and eulogised Viṣṇu, the lord of sacrifices and the primordial Puruṣa.

24. The eternal lord Viṣṇu saw the eternal sacrifices and told them looking at the gods too including Indra.

Viṣṇu said:—

25. In order to destroy the three cities and to bring about prosperity in the three worlds, O gods perform the worship of lord Śiva along with the lord of sacrifices.

Sanatkumāra said:—

26. On hearing the words of Viṣṇu, the intelligent lord of the gods and bowing to him lovingly, the gods eulogised the lord of sacrifices.

27. O sage, eulogising thus, the gods worshipped the Sacrificial Being in accordance with the rules governing the same with the complete rites.

28. Then from the sacrificial pit rose up thousands of Bhūtas of huge size and armed with tridents, spears, iron clubs and other weapons.

29-31. The gods saw thousands of Bhūtasaṅghas armed with tridents and spears and possessing various weapons such as staffs, bows, stones, etc. They had various missiles to strike with. They were in different guises. They resembled the destructive fire and Rudra. They were on a par with the destructive Sun. When they bowed to him and stood waiting in front, Viṣṇu saw them. The glorious lord of sacrifices who carried out the behests of Rudra, spoke to them.

32. Viṣṇu said—"O Bhūtas, listen to my statement. You are all very powerful and have risen up for fulfilling

the task of the gods. All of you go immediately to the three cities.

33. Go there, strike at, break and burn the three cities of the Asuras. O Bhūtas, thereafter you can go away as you please for prosperity.

Sanatkumāra said:—

34. On hearing the words of the lord, the hosts of Bhūtas bowed to the lord of the gods and went to the three cities of the Asuras.

35. Immediately after their entry into the cities they were reduced to ashes like moths in the fire.

36. Those who escaped fled out of the cities and came grief-stricken to Viṣṇu.

37. On seeing them and hearing the incidents in detail, lord Viṣṇu pondered over this.

38. On realising that all the gods were distressed and dejected in the mind, he too was extremely grieved.

39. He became much worried at the thought "How can I destroy the three cities of the Asuras, with force and carry out the task of the gods?"

40. The lord who had authoritatively laid down the rules of conduct according to the Vedas, said "There is no doubt in this that the virtuous ones cannot be destroyed by black magic.

41. O good gods, these Asuras and the other residents of the three cities are virtuous. Hence they have become invincible. Not in any other manner.

42. After perpetrating great sins they worship Śiva and so they are freed of all sins even as the leaves of the lotus from water.

43. O gods, thanks to the worship of Śiva, their cherished desires are realised. Different means of enjoyment in the world are brought under their control.

44. Hence these Asuras who are devoted to the phallic worship enjoy different kinds of pleasures and prosperity and salvation hereafter.

45. Then putting obstacles in their activities of virtuous rites, by means of magic art I shall destroy the three cities

of the Asuras quickly for accomplishing the task of the Asuras."

46. After thinking thus, lord Viṣṇu set himself to the task of interfering with the sacred rites of the Asuras.

47. As long as the worship of Śiva is continued and as long as the pure activities are strictly adhered to, there is no question of their ruin at all.

48. Hence such means shall be followed as will make Vedic Dharma disappear thence. Undoubtedly the Asuras will foresake their worship of the phallic emblem of Śiva.

49. Deciding thus, Viṣṇu started ridiculing the Vedas for putting up obstacles in the virtuous activities of the Asuras.

50. At the bidding of Śiva, Viṣṇu who was commanded to protect the three worlds, and who renders help to the gods spoke to them.

Viṣṇu said:—

51. O gods, you go to your own abodes. Undoubtedly I shall carry on the task of the gods to the extent of my intellect.

52. Strenuously I shall make them averse to Śiva. Coming to know that they are devoid of devotion to him he will reduce them to ashes.

Sanatkumāra said:—

53. O sage, accepting his behest with bent head, the gods and Brahmā felt satisfied and with faith in their hearts returned to their abodes.

54. Thereafter Viṣṇu performed deeds conducive to the welfare of the gods. Listen to those excellent deeds destructive of all sins.

CHAPTER FOUR

(*The Tripuras are initiated*)

Sanatkumāra said:—

1. For causing obstacles in their virtuous activities, Viṣṇu of great brilliance, created a Puruṣa[184] born of himself.

2. He had a shaven head, wore dirty clothes, held a woven wicker vessel in his hand and a roll of cotton in his hand which he shook at every step.

3. His hands tucking at the cloth were weak. His face was pale and weak. In a faltering voice he was muttering "Dharma, Dharma."

4. He bowed to Viṣṇu and stood in front of him. He spoke to Viṣṇu with hands joined in reverence.

5. "O laudable, revered one, please tell me what my names are and what my place shall be."

6. On hearing these auspicious words, Lord Viṣṇu became delighted and spoke these words.

Viṣṇu said:—

7. O intelligent one, born of me, you are certainly identical with me in form. Know why you have been created. I shall tell you.

8. You are born of me. You can perform my task. You are my own. Certainly you will be worthy of worship always.

9. Let your name be Arihat. You will have other auspicious names too. I shall assign to you a place after-

184. According to the present context Viṣṇu created a delusive teacher called Māyāmoha who created a Māyāśāstra of sixteen lakhs of ślokas in Apabhraṁśa, preaching Jina Dharma for misguiding the Asuras. Māyāmoha created four sorts of preachers for the propagation of Jina Dharma. He preached non-violence, forbade Śrauta and Smārta rituals, discarded Varṇāśrama system, created an order for women that resulted in leaving their home and leading the life of nuns. In some versions, the role is assigned to Bṛhaspati, the preceptor of the Gods who in the guise of their preceptor Śukra deludes the Asuras. For details, see Māyāmohaprakaraṇa in Padma, Viṣṇu, Liṅga, Matsya etc.

wards. Now hear with reverence what is relevant to the context.

10-11. O you who wield Māyā, ceate a deceptive sacred text of sixteen hundred thousand verses,[185] contrary to Śrutis and Smṛtis wherein Varṇas and Āśramas shall be eschewed. Let that holy text be in Apabhraṁśa lauguage. Let there be emphasis on actions. You shall strain yourself to extend it further.

12. I shall bestow on you the ability to create it. Different kinds of magic arts shall be subservient to you."

13. On hearing the words of Viṣṇu, the great soul, the Māyā Puruṣa bowed to and replied to Viṣṇu.

The shaven-head said:—

14. O lord, command me quickly what I shall do. At your bidding, all activities shall be fruitful.

Sanatkumāra said:—

15. Saying this he recited the main tenet in the deceptive philosophy. "Heaven and hell are functioning here itself."

16. Remembering the lotus-like feet of Śiva, Viṣṇu told him again. "These Asuras, the residents of the three cities, shall be deluded.

17. O intellegent one, they shall be initiated by you. They shall be taught strenuously. At my bidding you will incur no sin on that account.

18. O ascetic, no doubt, Vedic and Smārta rites flourish and shine there. But these shall certainly be exploded through this Vidyā.

19. O you with shaven head, you shall go there for destroying the residents of the three cities. Revealing the Tāmasika rites, destroy the three cities.

20. After that, O great one, you shall go to the desert

185. The reading 'षोडशहस्रकम्' found in the printed editions of Śivapurāṇa is incorrect. On the authority of Matsyapurāṇa (Ch. 24) we have adopted the reading षोडशलक्षकम् and translated accordingly.

region and stay there carrying on your own duties and activities till the advent of the Kali age.

21. When the Kali age begins let your Dharma be revealed. You shall then continue to do so by means of disciples and disciples' disciples.

22. At my bidding your cult shall certainly expand. Depending upon my permission and direction you will attain me as your goal."

23. At the bidding of the lord Śiva transmitted through the thought process, Viṣṇu, the powerful, commanded him thus and vanished.

24. Then the ascetic of shaven head acting in accordance with Viṣṇu's behest created four disciples of the like form as himself and taught them the deceptive cult.

25. The four disciples had shaven heads and were of auspicious features. They bowed to Viṣṇu, the great soul and stood waiting.

26. O sage, the delighted Viṣṇu too, who carries out the behests of Śiva spoke to those four disciples.

27. "Just as your preceptor you too will become blessed at my bidding. There is no doubt in this that you will attain good goal.

28. The four disciples with shaven heads followed the heretic cult. They had the wicker vessel in their hands. They covered their mouths with a piece of cloth.

29. They habitually wore dirty clothes. They did not talk much. Delightedly they used to speak "Dharma is the great gain, the true essence" and some similar words.

30. They held a besom broom made of pieces of cloths. They used to walk step by step very slowly because they were afraid of injuring living beings.

31. O sage, with great joy they bowed to the lord and stood in front of him.

32. They were grasped by the hand by Viṣṇu and formally entrusted to the preceptor. Their names too were announced by him particularly and lovingly.

33. "Just as you, these too also belong to me. The initial prefix to their names shall be the word "Pūjya" because they are worthy of respect.

34. Let the names Ṛṣi, Yati, Ācārya, and Upādhyāya also be well known appendages to you all.

35. My names shall also be assumed by you. The auspicious name "Arihat" shall be considered destructive of sins.

36. All activities conducive to the happiness of the worlds shall be performed by you. The goal of those who carry on activities favourable to the worlds shall become excellent."

Sanatkumāra said:—

37. Then, bowing to Viṣṇu who carried out the wishes of Śiva, the deceptive sage went joyously to the three cities accompanied by his disciples.

38. Urged by Viṣṇu of great magic, that sage of great self-control entered the three cities and created illusion.

39. Stationing himself in a garden at the outskirts of the city, accompanied by his disciples he set his magic in motion. That was powerful enough to fascinate even the expert magicians.

40. O sage, his magic was ineffective in the three cities by virtue of Siva's worship. Then the heretic sage became distressed.

41. He mentally remembered and eulogised Viṣṇu many times, with an aching heart. He had been so dispirited and listless.

42. On being remembered by him Viṣṇu mentally thought of Śiva. Receiving his behest by the process of thought forms he remembered Nārada.

43. Immediately after, Nārada approached Viṣṇu. After bowing to him and eulogising him, he stood before Viṣṇu with palms joined in reverence.

44. Viṣṇu, the foremost among the intelligent and who always carried out the tasks of the gods and who was engaged in rendering help to the worlds spoke to Nārada then.

45. "O dear, this is being mentioned to you at the bidding of Śiva. Go to the three cities immediately. The

sage has gone there already for deluding the residents of the cities."

Sanatkumāra said:—

46. On hearing his words, Nārada, the excellent sage went there quickly where the ascetic expert in magic was stationed.

47. Nārada, an expert in magic, at the bidding of the lord, an expert in the art of illusion, entered the three cities along with the deceptive sage, and got himself initiated.

48. Then Nārada approached the lord of the three cities. After the preliminary enquiries about his health and welfare he spoke to the king.

Nārada said:—

49. A certain sage, very virtuous and excellent master of lores has arrived here. He possesses complete knowledge of the Vedic lore.

50. Many cults have been observed by me but none of them is like his. Seeing the eternal virtue in this cult we have got ourselves initiated into it.

51. O great king, O excellent Asuras, if you have any interest in that cult, you shall get yourself initiated into it.

Sanatkumāra said:—

52. On hearing his words full of significance, the lord of the Asuras was deluded and exclaimed with surprise in his heart.

53. "Since Nārada has been initiated we too shall be initiated." Resolving thus, the Asura approached the sage.

54. On seeing his features, the Asura was deluded by his magic. After bowing to him be spoke thus.

The Tripura ruler said:—

55. O sage of pure mind, you shall perform my initiation. I shall become your disciple. True. It is undoubtedly true.

56. On hearing the frank words of the ruler of the

Asuras the heretic sage, professing to be eternal, spoke emphatically.

57. O excellent Asura, if you are prepared to act according to my behests, I shall initiate you, otherwise not, even if you strive for a number of times.

58. On hearing these words the king was deluded by magic. With palms joined in reverence he immediately replied to the sage.

The Asura said:—

59. I shall carry out whatever command you are pleased to give. I will not transgress your orders. True. It is certainly true.

Sanatkumāra said:—

60. On hearing the words of the Tripura-ruler, the excellent sage removed the cloth from his mouth and said.

61. "O lord of Asuras, take initiation in this most excellent of all cults. By this initiation you will become contented."

Sanatkumāra said:—

62. Saying thus, the deceptive sage immediately performed the initiation of the ruler of the Asuras, in accordance with his cult observing all rules.

63. O sage, when the ruler of the Asuras was initiated along with his brothers, the residents of the three cities too got themselves initiated.

64. O sage, the entire Tripuras were filled with the line of disciples of the sage, an expert in great art of illusion.

CHAPTER FIVE

(*The Tripuras are fascinated*)

Vyāsa said:—

1. When the ruler of the Asuras was initiated after being deluded by the deceptive sage expert in the magic art what did the sage say? What did the ruler of the Asuras do?

Sanatkumāra said:—

2. After offering him initiation, the ascetic Arihan served by his disciples, Nārada and others, spoke to the ruler of the Asuras.

Arihan said:—

3. O ruler of the Asuras, listen to my statement, pregnant with wisdom. It is the essence of the Vedānta and bears high esoteric importance.

4. The entire universe is eternal. It has no creator nor it is an object of creation. It evolves itself and gets annihilated by itself.

5. There are many bodies from Brahmā down to a blade of grass. They themselves are the gods for them. There is no other God.

6. What we mean by Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Rudra are only the names of embodied beings just like my name Arihan etc.

7. Just as our bodies perish when their time arrives, so also the bodies of all beings from Brahmā to a mosquito perish when their time arrives.

8. When we consider, none of these bodies is superior to any other since in respect of taking food, copulation, sleep and fear these are invariably the same everywhere.

9. Taking in water and foodstuffs to the required quantity, all living beings derive a kindred satisfaction, neither more nor less.

10. After drinking water we are gladly relieved of thirst. Others too are equally relieved. There is no deviation this way or that.

11. There may be a thousand damsels of exquisite beauty and comely features. But only one of them can be used at a time for the sexual intercourse.

12. Let there be hundreds of horses, of different varieties. But for the purpose of riding only one can be used on one occasion.

13. The pleasure that one derives in that sleep on a cushioned couch is the same that one derives by sleeping on the bare ground.

14. Just as we, the embodied beings, are afraid of death so also the bodies from Brahmā to the worm are afraid of death.

15. If we analyse with a keen intellect, all the embodied being are equal. After coming to this conclusion it does not behove anyone to injure anyone else.

16. There is no other virtue equal to the mercy shown to living beings. Hence all men shall strenuously practise acts of mercy to living beings.

17. If a single living being is protected it amounts to the protection of the three worlds. If that is killed it amounts to the killing of all others. Hence it is our duty to protect and abstain from killing others.

18. Non-violence is the greatest virtue. Affliction of others is a great sin. Salvation is defined as non-dependence on others. Eating the food of our choice is heavenly bliss.

19. This has been mentioned by the earlier sages with good justification to be sure. Hence no violence should be indulged in by men who are afraid of hell.

20. There is no sin equal to violence in the three worlds, consisting of the mobile and immobile. A person who afflicts others violently goes to hell. A non-violent man goes to heaven.

21. There are many kinds of charitable gifts. Of what avail are these which give very insignificant results. There is no other gift equal to that of protection.

22. Four types of gifts have been mentioned by the great sages for the welfare of the people here and hereafter as a result of discussions and deliberations of various sacred texts.

23. Protection shall be granted to the frightened,

medicine to the sick, learning to the student and food to the hungry.

24. All sorts of charitable gifts recommended by the sages do not merit even a sixteenth part of the gift of protecttion to a living being.

25. The strength that one derives by the use of gems mantras, and herbs is of inconceivable influence. But it is practised strenuously only for earning money.

26. The hoarding and amassing of vast wealth is useful only for the propitiation of twelve organs of senses. Of what avail is the propitiation of other things?

27. The twelve organs of senses are the five organs of activity and the five organs of knowledge together with the mind and intellect.

28. Living beings have heaven and bell here itself and not anywhere else. Happiness is heaven and misery is hell.

29. If the body is cast off in the midst of enjoyment thati s the greatest liberation conceived by the philosophers.

30. When pain comes to an end along with its impressions, If ignorance too dies away, it is conceived as the greatest salvation by the philosophers.

31. Supporters and exponents of the Vedas accept this as an authoritative Vedic text that no living being shall be injured. Violence is not justifiable.

32. The Vedic text encouraging slaughter of animals cannot be held authoritative by the learned. To say that violence is allowed in Agniṣṭoma is an erroneous view of the wicked.

33. It is surprising that heaven is sought by cutting off trees, slaughtering animals, making a muddy mess with blood and by burning gingelly seeds and ghee.

34. Narrating his opinions to the leader of the Tripuras, the ascetic addressed the citizens with great zeal.

35. He referred to things which gave credence, being visible, which brought happiness to the body, which are indicated in Buddhistic theology and which are consistent with the Vedic passages.

36. It is said in the Vedas that Bliss is an aspect of the Brahman. That shall be taken as it is. It is false to bring in various alternatives.

37. One shall seek and enjoy happiness as long as the

body is hale and hearty, as long as the sense-organs are not impaired and as long as the old age is far off.

38. When there is sickness, impairment of the sense-organs and old age how can one derive happiness ? Hence those who seek happiness shall be prepared to give away even the body.

39. The Earth is burdened by those who are not ready to please and satisfy the suppliant. It is not burdened by oceans, mountains and trees.

40. The body is ready to go in a trice, and hoarded things are attended with the risk of dwindling down. Realising this a sensible man shall see to the pleasure of his body.

41. It is mentioned in the Vedas that this body is going to constitute the breakfast for dogs, crows and worms. The body has its ultimate end in being reduced to ashes.

42. It is unnecessary to divide the people into different castes. When all are men who is superior and who is inferior ?

43. Old men say that creation began with Brahmā. He begot two sons the famous Dakṣa and Marīci.

44. Kaśyapa, the son of Marīci married thirteen of the sweet-eyed daughters of Dakṣa, they say, in accordance with righteous path.

45. But people of modern times whose intelligence and valour are but a modicum unnecessarily wrangle over the fact whether this is proper or improper.

46. Some of the ancestors thought that the four castes are born of mouth, arms, thighs etc. of Brahmā.[186] But when we consider, this does not fit in properly.

47. How can sons born of the same body or from the same body be of four different castes ?

48. Hence the divisions of castes and outcastes do not appear to be sound. Hence no difference between man and man should be entertained.

Sanatkumāra said:—

49. O sage, addressing the lord of the Asuras and the

186. It refers to the Vedic and Puranic classification of society into four Varṇas, viz. Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya, Vaiśya and Śūdra, said to have emanated from the mouth, arms, thighs and feet of the creator.

citizens thus, the sage with his disciples spoiled the Vedic rites in a determined manner.

50. He then criticised the womanly virtues of chastity and manly virtues of continence etc.

51. Similarly he attacked and repudiated the divine rites, Śrāddhika rites, sacrificial rites and holy observances and festivals, pilgrimages and anniversaries.

52. Worship of Śiva, propitiation of his phallic form, adoration of Viṣṇu, Sun, Gaṇeśa and other deities in accordance with the sacred texts were repudiated by him.

53. The heretic sage, an expert in wielding magic art, foremost among the deceptive, criticised the ceremonial ablutions and charitable gifts that are made on auspicious occasions.

54. O foremost among brahmins, why shall I dilate upon this topic ? Suffice it to say that in the three cities every type of Vedic rites was completely stopped by that deceptive heretic sage.

55. The women of the three cities who were hitherto devotedly attached to their husbands were deluded and misguided and they abandoned their noble inclinations to serve their husbands.

56. The fascinated men practised rites of seduction and winning over and made their artifices fruitful in gaining other men's wives.

57. The attendant maids in the harems, the princes, the citizens and the ladies were perfectly enchanted by him.

58. Thus when the citizens became averse to virtuous rites and actions, evil reigned supreme.

59. At the bidding of lord Viṣṇu, his magic art and evil fortune visited the three cities.

60. The glory that they had acquired by the boon of Brahmā, the lord of the gods, went out forsaking them, at the behest of Brahmā.

61. Blessing them with the utter delusion of their intellect, perpetrated by the illusion of Viṣṇu, Nārada became contented.

62. Though Nārada and the heretic sage had been in that guise for long, they were not defiled, thanks to the benediction of lord Śiva.

63. As Śiva willed, O sage, the capacity of the ruler of the Asuras became stunted and thwarted as also of his brothers and Maya.

CHAPTER SIX

(*Prayer to Śiva*)

Vyāsa said:—

1. When the ruler of the Asuras, his brothers and the citizens were thus deluded, O lord Sanatkumāra, what happened ? Please mention everything.

Sanatkumāra said:—

2-3. When the Asuras had become so, when they had abandoned the worship of Śiva, when the virtuous rites of chaste women came to an end and evil conduct came to stay, Viṣṇu was apparently contented. Accompanied by the gods, Viṣṇu went to Kailāsa in order to intimate their activities to Śiva.

4-5. Viṣṇu, the gods, Brahmā and others stood near him and with great concentration they meditated on him. Viṣṇu and Brahmā eulogised the omniscient Śiva with pleasing words.

Viṣṇu said:—

6. "Obeisance to you, great lord, the great soul, Nārāyaṇa, Rudra and Brahmā, obeisance to you in the form of Brahman."

7. After eulogising lord Śiva thus and prostrating at length, he repeated the mantra of Dakṣiṇāmūrti Rudra.

8-9. He repeated the mantra fifteen million times standing in water and concentrating his mind on him. Lord Viṣṇu meditated on the great lord Śiva. In the meantime, the gods too eulogised him with devotion.

The gods said:—

10. Obeisance to you, the soul of all, obeisance to Śiva

the remover of distress, obeisance to the blue-necked Rudra, obeisance to the knowledge-formed Śiva of great mind.

11. You are our ultimate goal for ever. You are the remover of all adversities. O destroyer of the enemies of the gods, you alone are to be respected by us always.

12. You are the beginning. You are the primordial being. You are self-bliss. You are the everlasting lord. You are the lord of the universe, the direct creator of Prakṛti and Puruṣa.

13. You alone are the creator, sustainer and the annihilator of the worlds. Assuming the Guṇas of Rajas, Sattva, and Tamas you are Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva.

14. In this universe, you enable people to cross the ocean of Existence. You are the undecaying lord of all. You are the granter of boons. You are the subject and not the object of speech and contents.

15. You shall be requested for salvation by the Yogins, the formost among those who know the theory of Yoga. You are stationed inside the lotus like heart of the Yogins.

16. The Vedas and the saintly men speak of you as the supreme Brahman. You are a heaped mass of splendour and greater than the greatest. They call you the great principle.

17. What they call the great soul in the universe, O lord, are you yourself, O Śiva soul of all, ruler of the three worlds.

18. Whatever is seen, heard or eulogised, whatever is being realised, O preceptor of the universe, are you alone. They call you minuter than the atom and greater than the greatest.

19. I bow to you everywhere, you who have hands, legs, eyes, heads, mouths, ears and noses everywhere.

20. I bow to you everywhere, you who are omniscient who pervade everything, you who are unveiled as the lord of all, you who are omniformed and odd-eyed.

21. I bow to you everywhere who are the lord of all, who preside over the worlds, who are the excellent Satya and Śiva and who have the refulgence of innumerable suns.

22. I bow to you everywhere, you the lord of the uni-

verse devoid of beginning and end, the lord of the twenty six Tattvas[187] and the activiser of everything.

23. I bow to you everywhere you the activiser of the Prakṛti, the great grandfather of everyone, the lord, the body of everyone.

24. The Śrutis and those who know the essence of Śrutis speak of you thus. You are the abode of all, the self-born and the knower of the essence of Śrutis.

25. The various living beings created by you and to be created in future are invisible to us. The gods, the Asuras, the brahmins, nay, the mobile and immobile beings eulogise you alone.

26. O Śiva, dear to the gods, save us, the gods who have no other go, by killing all the Asuras instantaneously. We are practically destroyed by the Tripuras.

27. O lord Śiva, they are now deluded by your magic. O lord, they have gone astray from the virtuous path through the expedient taught by Viṣṇu.

28. O lord, favourably disposed towards your devotees, those Asuras have resorted to Buddha's religion and philosophy, thanks to our good fortune and hence they have eschewed all Vedic sacred rites.

29. You have always been the only one carrying out the task of the gods and the bestower of refuge. We have sought refuge in you. Please do as you desire.

Sanatkumāra said:—

30. After eulogising lord Śiva thus, the distressed gods stood in front of him with palms joined in reverence and kneeling low.

187. Substitute षड्विंशकमनीश्वरम् for षड्त्रिंशकमनीश्वरम् । The latter reading which is found in most of the printed editions of Śivapurāṇa is incorrect. Cf. Liṅgapurāṇa : 1. 71. 109.

According to the present text, the intellect, ego, mind, 10 senses 5 gross and 5 subtle elements, the invisible primordial nature (Pradhāna) the individual soul (Jīva), the transcendent God (Īśvara) constitute a group of twenty-six categories wherein Jīva is the enjoyer of the fruits and Īśvara is the spectator of the working of Prakṛti. But there is another twentyseventh category named Śiva or Sadāśiva, the highest divine being (परात्परतर:) who alone is capable of bestowing grace upon his devotees.

31. Eulogised thus by Indra and others and by the repetition of Japas by Viṣṇu, the delighted lord came there seated on his bull.

32. Getting down from Nandīśa and embracing Viṣṇu, lord Śiva delighted in his mind cast his benign look on all with his hand resting on Nandin.

33. Casting a sympathetic glance on the gods, the delighted Śiva, lord of Pārvatī, spoke to Viṣṇu in a majestic tone.

Śiva said:—

34. "O lord of gods, all the intentions of the gods have been understood by me now. The power of Viṣṇu's magic and that of the intelligent Nārada has been known.

35. O most excellent of the gods, there is no doubt in this that I will destroy the three cities of the Asuras if they persist in indulging in evil activities.

36. But the great Asuras are my firm devotees. They shall be killed only by me, for they have been forced to abandon their excellent virtue under false persuasion.

37. Let Viṣṇu or any one else slay them now that they have been made to abandon their Dharma. The Asuras of the three cities have become devoid of devotion to me."

38. O great sage, on hearing these words of Śiva, all the heaven-dwellers and Viṣṇu became dispirited.

39. On seeing the gods and Viṣṇu sitting cheerless, Brahmā, the creator of the worlds spoke to Śiva with palms joined in reverence.

Brahmā said:—

40. There is no sin in this, since you are the foremost among those who know the Yogic theory; you are the great lord, the great Brahman and the saviour of gods and sages always.

41. It is at your own bidding that they have been deluded. You induced them to be deluded. Although the Asuras have forsaken their duties and your worship, they cannot be killed by others.

42. Hence, O great lord, the saviour of the lives of

the gods and the sages, the Mlecchas[188] shall be killed by you for the protection of the good.

43. As it is the duty of a king, you will not be sinning by their destruction. Hence, the good people, brahmins etc shall be saved and the thorns uprooted.

44. Even an ordinary king would do so if he cares to maintain his sway. You have the suzerainty of all the worlds. Hence, tarry not to protect us.

45. Great sages, Indra, sacrifices, Vedas, all the Śāstras, Viṣṇu and even I—all these depend on you, O lord of gods.

46. O lord, you are the emperor of all deities, the lord of all. Viṣṇu and the entire universe constitute your retinue.

47. Viṣṇu is your heir-apparent, O unborn one, I, Brahmā, am your priest and Śukra who carries out your behests is the Royal officer.

48. The other gods too, O lord, are subjects to your control. They continue to perform their own duties. True. It is undoubtedly true.

Sanatkumāra said:—

49. On hearing the words of Brahmā, Śiva, the delighted lord of the gods replied to Brahmā.

Śiva said:—

50. O Brahmā, if I am to be proclaimed the emperor of the gods, I do not have the paraphernalia characteristic of my lordship.

51. I do not have a divine chariot and a divine charioteer. I do not possess bows and arrows which accord victory in a battle.

52. If there had been a chariot I could have sat in it and with bow and arrows I could have killed even powerful Asuras, with a resolute determination.

Sanatakumāra said:—

53. On hearing these words of the lord, the gods

188. Mlecchas are represented as violent, carnivorous, torturous, non-Aryan wild tribes who caused terror in the social life of the country.

including Brahmā, Indra and Viṣṇu were delighted. After bowing to him they spoke to lord Śiva.

The gods said:—

54. O lord of the gods, O great god, we shall constitute those paraphernalia—chariot etc. O lord, we are ready for the battle.

55. After saying so jointly after realising Śiva's wish they, the delighted gods, severally told him so, with palms joined in reverence.

CHAPTER SEVEN

(*The gods pray*)

Sanatkumāra said:—

1. On hearing the words of the gods and others, Śiva accepted the proposal. The lord is worthy of being sought refuge and is also favourably disposed to his devotees.

2. O sage, in the meantime the goddess Pārvatī arrived there with the two sons where Śiva was in conversation with the gods.

3. On seeing Pārvatī come there, Viṣṇu and others were surprised but without agitation they bowed to her in great humility.

4. O sage, they shouted cries of "Victory". But unable to know the cause of her arrival, they remained silent.

5. On being eulogised by the gods, the goddess Pārvatī full of wonderful enthusiasm spoke lovingly to her lord, an expert in different kinds of sports.

The goddess said:—

6. "O lord, see the sportive six-faced[189] Kārttikeya,

189. Kārttikeya is called a six-faced deity (षण्मुख:), for according to the legend Kārttikeya when born was fostered by the six Kṛttikās who offered their six breasts to him, so he became six-headed.

refulgent like the sun our excellent son embellished by excellent ornaments."

Sanatkumāra said:—

7. Thus addressed by the mother of the worlds with pleasing words, Lord Śiva was never satiated in drinking nectar of the beauty of Skanda's face.

8. He recollected the Asuras who had come (to fight and) pounded by his splendrous valour. Embracing and kissing Skanda on the head lord Śiva rejoiced much.

9. Then the mother of the universe stayed there for a while and held conversation with the lord. Afterwards the goddess, an expert in different kinds of sports stood up.

10. Then Śiva of good sports entered his apartment accompanied by Nandin and Pārvatī. He was then saluted by all the gods.

11. O sage, all the gods dispirited and worried stood on either side of the doorway of mansion of Śiva, the intelligent lord of the gods.

12. They began to mutter "What shall we do ? Where shall we go? Who will make us happy? Everything has happened with a "but." We are doomed."

13. Indra and others looked at one another's face. They were much agitated. They spoke in faltering words. They cursed their fate.

14. Some gods said "We are sinners." Others said "We are unfortunate." Still others said "The great Asuras are very fortunate."

15. In the meantime on hearing their multifarious voices, Kumbhodara[190] of excessive refulgence beat the gods with a baton.

16. The terrified gods shouting "Hā Hā" fled from there. The sages faltered and fell on the ground. There was excitement and great confusion.

17. Unnerved and languid, Indra crawled on his knees. The celestial sages dropped to the ground.

18. The excessively agitated sages and gods gathered

190. Kālidāsa mentions Kumbhodara as an attendant of Śiva. Cf. Raghu. ii. 35.

together and approached Brahmā and Viṣṇu of friendly tamperament.

19. The sages Kaśyapa and others said to Viṣṇu who removes the fear of all the worlds "O this is due to our ill luck."

20. The other brahmins said—"Our task is not completed due to our ill luck." Still others who were greatly surprised said—"How did this obstacle happen ?"

21. O sage, on hearing these words of Kaśyapa and others, Viṣṇu consoled the sages and the gods and spoke thus.

Viṣṇu said:—

22. O gods, O sages, you listen to my words with attention. Why are you distressed? Eschew your sorrows.

23. O gods ponder over this. This propitiation of the great is not an easy task. It is heard that there is great difficulty at first in propitiating the great. The lord will certainly be pleased after coming to know of your resolute nature.

24. Let this be pondered over well by all of you, how can lord Śiva, the presiding deity of the Gaṇas be made favourable immediately.

25-26. O scholars, the following mantra shall be repeated—Utter the syllable Oṁkāra first, then repeat the word Namaḥ (obeisance). Then say Śivāya (to Śiva). Then repeat Śubham" twice and "Kuru" twice. Afterwards say "Śivāya Namaḥ Om."[191]

27. If you repeat this mantra a crore times thinking of Śiva, Śiva will carry out the task.

28. O sage, when this was mentioned by Viṣṇu the powerful, the gods began to propitiate Śiva.

29. For the fulfilment of the task of the gods and the sages, Viṣṇu and Brahmā, with minds fixed in Śiva performed the Japa.

30. O excellent sage, they stood there steady and repeated the mantra a crore times uttering the name "Śiva" several times.

191. The formula runs as follows : ओं नमः शिवाय शुभं शुभं कुरु कुरु शिवाय नमः ओं ।

31. In the meantime Śiva came into direct view assuming his real form and spoke.

Lord Śiva said:—

32. O Viṣṇu, O Brahmā, O gods and O sages of auspicious rites, I am delighted by your Japa. Speak out the desired boon.

The gods said:—

33. O Śiva, lord of the gods, lord of the universe, if you are pleased, realising that the gods are unnerved, let the Tripuras be destroyed.

34. O lord Śiva, O merciful one, O kinsman of the distressed, save us. We, gods, have always been saved from adversities by you alone.

Sanatkumāra said:—

35. O brahmin, on hearing these words uttered by them including Viṣṇu and Brahmā, lord Śiva laughed to himself and spoke again.

Lord Śiva said:—

36. Viṣṇu, O Brahmā, O gods, O sages all of you listen to my words with attention considering that the three cities have been already destroyed.

37. Hence make arrangements for the chariot, charioteer, divine bow and excellent arrows as agreed to by you all. Do not delay.

38. O Brahmā, O Viṣṇu, you are the lord of the three worlds, to be sure. Hence provide me with the paraphernalia of an emperor.

39. You too had been entrusted with the tasks of creation and sustenance. You shall make all efforts, considering the destruction of the three cities an act of help to the gods.

40. This mantra is highly meritorious and auspicious. It generates the pleasure of the gods. It yields both worlds by enjoyment and salvation, confers cherished desires and brings about the happiness of the devotees of Śiva.

41. It is conducive to blessedness, fame, longevity to

those who seek heaven. Those who are free from desires derive the benefit of salvation.

42. The man who repeats this mantra in purity, hears or narrates this to anyone, shall attain all desires.

Sanatkumāra said:—

43. On hearing these words of Śiva, the great Ātman, the gods derived more pleasure than Viṣṇu and Brahmā.

44. At his bidding, Viśvakarman made a splendid chariot of good features, consisting of all the gods, for the welfare of the people.

CHAPTER EIGHT

(*The detailed description of the chariot etc*)

Vyāsa said:—

1. O Sanatkumāra, of good intellect, O omniscient one, O foremost among the devotees of Śiva, this wonderful story of lord Śiva has been narrated to us.

2. Now please mention the structure of the chariot[192] which consisted of all the gods and which had been made by the intelligent Viśvakarman.

Sūta said:—

3. On hearing these words of Vyāsa, Sanatkumāra the great sage remembered the lotus-like feet of Śiva and spoke thus.

Sanatkumāra said:—

4. O sage Vyāsa, of great intellect, listen to the description of the structure of the chariot etc which I shall give to the extent of my intellect after remembering the lotus-like feet of Śiva.

5. The divine chariot of lord Śiva consisting of all the worlds was built by Viśvakarman with devoted effort.

192. The present account of the cosmic chariot made for Śiva tallies with that in the Matsya Purāṇa (chapter 133).

6. It was appreciated by all. It was golden in colour and all the elements had gone into its making. The right wheel was the sun and the left wheel was the moon.

7-8. The right wheel had twelve spokes. O great brahmin, the twelve Ādityas presided over them. The left wheel had sixteen spokes. O you of excellent rites, the sixteen spokes of the left side wheel consisted of the sixteen digits of the moon. All the asterisms embellished the left side.

9. The six seasons constituted the rims of the wheels of the chariot, O great Brahmin. The Puṣkara of the chariot was the sky. The inner side of the chariot was Mandara.

10. The rising and the setting mountains constituted the poleshafts. Mahāmeru was the support and the Keśara mountains the sharp sides.

11. The year constituted its velocity. The two Ayanas northern and southern constituted the junctions of the wheels and axles. The Muhūrtas constituted the joints and the Kalās the pins of the yoke.

12. The division of time Kāṣṭhā constituted the nose of the chariot and the Kṣaṇas the axle-shaft. The Nimeṣas constituted the bottom of the carriage and the minutest divisions of time constituted the poles.

13. The firmament constituted the fender of the chariot; Heaven and salvation the flag staffs; Abhramu and Kāmadhenu constituted its harrows at the end of the shafts.

14. The unmanifest principle formed their shaft and cosmic intellect the chariot's reeds. The cosmic Ego cosmic corners and elements its strength.

15. O excellent sage, the cosmic sense-organs constituted the embellishments of this chariot on all sides. Faith was its movements.

16. The six Vedāṅgas were its ornaments. O great ones of good rites, the Purāṇas, Nyāya, Mīmāṁsā and Dharma Śāstras constituted the side trinkets.

17. The forceful and excellent mantras with their syllables and feet, of all characteristic features and the stages in life constituted the tinkling bells.

18. Ananta embellished with thousand hoods constituted its fittings and the main and subsidiary quarters, the pedestals of the chariot.

19. The clouds Puṣkara and others constituted the gem-studded banners of glowing colours. The four oceans are remembered as the bullocks of the chariot.

20. Gaṅgā and other rivers shining in excellent female forms and decorated in all ornaments held the Cāmaras in their hands.

21. Taking up their places in the different parts of the chariot, they brightened it up. The seven courses of the wind Āvaha[193] etc. constituted the excellent steps of gold leading the chariot.

22. The Lokāloka mountain[194] formed its side steps. The lake mānasa etc. constituted its brilliant outer and oblique steps.

23. The Varṣa mountains constituted the cords and chains all round the chariot. All the residents of the region Tala constituted the bottem surface of the chariot.

24. Lord Brahmā was the charioteer, the gods were holders of the bridle. Praṇava the Vedic divinity constituted the long whip of Brahmā.

25. The syllable A constituted the great umbrella, Mandara the side staff. The lord of mountains became his bow and the lord of serpents the bowstring.

26. Goddess Sarasvatī in the form of the Vedas constituted the bells of the bow. The brilliant Viṣṇu became the arrow and Agni the spear-head.

27. O sage, the four Vedas are said to be his horses. The remaining planets became their embellishments.

28. His army came up from water. The winds were his feathers, wings etc. Vyāsa and other sages were the drivers of the vehicle.

29. O great sage, why should I dilate. I shall succinctly say. Everything in the world found a place in the chariot.

193. आवह, प्रवह, संवह, उद्वह, विवह, परिवह, परावह are the seven bands of air assigned to the atmospheric region between भूर्लोक and स्वर्लोक ।

194. It is a fabulous belt of mountains bounding the outermost of the seven seas and dividing the visible world from the regions of darkness. H. M.

30. At the bidding of Brahmā and Viṣnu the chariot and its adjuncts were created bythe intelligent Viśvakarman.*

CHAPTER NINE

(*Śiva's campaign*)

Sanatkumāra said:—

1. Brahmā handed over that divine chariot of various wonderful features to Śiva after yoking the Vedas as the horses.

2. After dedicating the same to Śiva, he requested Śiva the lord of the gods, approved by Viṣṇu and other gods to mount the chariot.

3. The great lord Śiva identifying himself with all the gods got into that chariot that had various scaffoldings attached to it.

4. He was then eulogised by the gods, Gandharvas, serpents, sages, Viṣṇu, Brahmā and the guardians of the quarters.

5-6. Śiva, the granter of boons, surrounded by the groups of damsels, experts in music, shone well. Glancing at the charioteer when he mounted the chariot concocted with everything in the world, the horses constituted by the Vedas fell headlong to the ground.

7. The earth quaked. The mountains became tremulous. Śeṣa, unable to bear his weight, became distressed and soon began to tremble.

8. Lord Viṣṇu assumed the form of a lordly bull and went under the chariot. He lifted it up and steadied it for a short while.

9. But in another instant, unable to bear the weighty splendour of lord Śiva seated in the chariot, the lordly bull had to kneel down and crawl on the ground.

10-12. But the lord touched the bridle and steadied the horses. Then Brahmā seated in the excellent chariot drove the excellent chariot with the velocity of mind and wind, at the bidding of the lord towards the three cities of the valiant

*On the construction of the Cosmic Chariot compare Matsya P. Ch. 133

Asuras. The cities were then in the sky. Lord Śiva was seated inside.

13. Then lord Śiva looked at the gods and said—"Give me the lordship of the animals. Then I shall kill the Asuras.

14. O excellent gods, the excellent Asuras can be killed only after assigning separate animalhood to the gods and others. Not otherwise."

Sanatkumāra said:—

15. On hearing these words of the intelligent lord of the gods, they became dispirited growing suspicious of animal hood.

16. On knowing what was passing through their minds, Śiva, the lord of the gods, the consort of Pārvatī sympathised with the gods and laughingly said.

Śiva said:—

17. "O excellent gods, you will not fall even in your animalhood. Let it be heard, and let the process of release from animalhood be practised.

18. He who performs the divine rite of Pāśupata will be released from animalhood. I promise this to you. Be attentive.

19. O excellent gods, there is no doubt about it that those who perform my Pāśupata rite will become liberated.

20. He who renders service perpetually or for twelve years, becomes relieved of animalhood.

21. Hence O excellent gods, perform this divine rite. You will be released from animalhood. There is no doubt about this."

195. Śiva is named Paśupati, the lord of animals. According to the legend, recorded in the present chapter, every deity was asked by Śiva to declare himself a mere Paśu or animal before Tripuras could be slain in the battle. The Gods accepted the proposal, declared themselves as animals and fought brutally. Lord Śiva won them the battle but Gods were still distressed. The lord then enjoined the observance of Pāśupata Vrata for the attainment of release from their animal nature.

This legend forms the basis for the formulation of Pāśupata sect which aims at the release of a Paśu (the individual soul) from the bondage of rebirth.

Santakumāra said:—

22. On hearing these words of lord Śiva, the great soul, Viṣṇu, Brahmā and other gods said. "So be it."

23. Hence all the gods and Asuras became the animals of the lord. Śiva became the lord of animals. He is the person who unties the nooses of the animals.

24. Then the name Paśupati, that bestows welfare, spread in all the worlds and became renowned.

25. Then the celestial sage, Indra, Brahmā, Viṣṇu and others rejoiced shouting "Victory."

26. Even in hundreds of years it is impossible to describe adequately the form of the great soul which he assumed then.

27. Śiva the lord of Pārvatī and everyone, the bestower of happiness to all, went ahead to destroy the three cities.

28. Then all the gods, resplendent like the sun, under the lord of the gods and others went on elephants, horses, lions, bulls and chariots to kill Tripuras, leaders of the Asuras.

29. The leading gods as huge as mountains went ahead delighted and well-armed with all sorts of missiles, plough-shares, mortars, iron clubs and uprooted trees as huge as mountains.

30. Then Indra, Brahmā, Viṣṇu and others went ahead of lord Śiva jubilantly shouting cries of victory to Śiva, well-armed with various weapons and shining brilliantly.

31. Sages with matted hair and staffs in the hands rejoiced. Siddhas and Cāraṇas moving about in the sky showered flowers.

32. O great brahmins, all the Gaṇeśvaras went to the three cities. Who can enumerate them fully? I shall mention a few.

33. Bhṛṅgin, the chief of all Gaṇeśas, surrounded by lord of Gaṇas and gods went speedily to destroy the three cities like Mahendra seated in an aerial chariot.

34-39. These were the important ones who were there—Keśa, Vigatavāsa, Mahākeśa, Mahājvara, Somavallīsavarṇa, Somapa, Sanaka, Somadhṛk, Sūryavarcas, Sūryapreṣaṇaka, Sūryākṣa, Sūrināman, Sura, Sundara, Praskanda, Kundara,

Caṇḍa, Kampana, Atikampana, Indra, Indrajava, Yantṛ, Himakara, Śatākṣa, Pañcākṣa, Sahasrākṣa, Mahodara, Satijahru, Śatāsya, Raṅka, Karpūrapūtana, Dviśikha, Triśikha, Ahaṁkārakāraka, Ajavaktra, Aṣṭavaktra, Hayakāraka and Ardhavaktraka. These and other innumerable lords of Gaṇas who cannot be characterised and classified surrounded Śiva and went ahead.

40. They were capable of burning the entire world including the mobile and immobile beings, within a trice by their very thought. Surrounding Śiva, the great lord, they went ahead.

41. Śiva is capable of burning the entire world. Of what avail are the Gaṇas, gods, chariot, and arrows to Śiva in order to burn the three cities?

42. O Vyāsa, that trident-bearing lord, of wonderful power of causing enjoyment and protection, himself went there with his own Gaṇas and the gods to burn the three cities of the enemies of gods.

43. What the reason was, I shall tell you, O excellent sage. It was to make his glory known to all the worlds, the glory that dispels all sins and dirt.

44. Another reason was to convince the wicked, since there is none to excel him among the gods.

CHAPTER TEN

(The burning of the Tripuras)

Sanatkumāra said:—

1. Then Śiva, the great lord, seated in the chariot and equipped with everything, got ready to burn the three cities completely, the cities of the enemies of the gods.

196. The Purāṇas record different versions of the burning of Tripurī. The present version is a regular legend based on an ancient tradition. There is however another version which describes graphically the devastation, oppression and barbarities practised by the Gaṇas which remind us of those perpetrated by the Hūṇa-chief Mihirakula in his invasions There is a veiled allusion to this event, for Agni is addressed as a Mleccha (Matsya p. 188. 51). There is no such anachronism in the ŚP account of Tripuradāha.

2-3. The lord stood in the wonderful posture of Pratyālīḍha for a hundred thousand years. The bow was well strung and kept near the head. The arrow was fixed. The fingers clenched at the bow firmly. The eyes were fixed.

4. Gaṇeśa was stationed on the thumb. During this time the three cities did not come within the target path of the trident-bearing lord.

5. Then from the firmament, the odd-eyed Śiva who was standing there holding the bow and the arrow heard an auspicious voice.

6. "O lord of the master of the universe, you will not kill the Tripuras as long as the lord Gaṇeśa is not adored".

7. On hearing these words, Śiva the destroyer of Andhaka called Bhadrakālī and worshipped the elephant-faced god Gaṇeśa.

8-9. When Gaṇeśa was worshipped, when he standing ahead was pleased, lord Śiva saw the three cities of the powerful Asuras, sons of Tāraka, joined together.

10. It is said that when the great lord Śiva, the lord of the Gods, the supreme Brahman, worshipped by all is there, it is not proper to say that he achieved success by another God's grace.

11. He is independent, the great Brahman, both possessed and devoid of attributes. He is invisible, the supreme soul and unsullied.

12. He is the soul of five divinities. He is worshipped by the five deities[197]. He is the great lord. There is none else worthy of worship. He is the ultimate abode of all.

13. Or, O sage, the activities of Śiva, the lord of the Gods, the granter of boons are but proper inasmuch as they constitute his divine sports.

14. When the great God stood up after woeshipping Śiva, the three cities joined together into one unit.

15. O sage, when the three cities came to a unified

197. The five gods Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Rudra, Skanda and Indra (See ŚP. VS 14 48) are in essence indentical with Śiva but they have also their distinct forms in which they remain subservient to him.

According to another version, the five deities are the son, Gaṇeśa, Durgā, Rudra and Viṣṇu. See note 174 P. 168.

whole, a tumultuous shout of joy rose up among the noble Gods and others.

16. Then all the Gods, Siddhas and the sages shouted out "Victory" and eulogised Śiva who has eight cosmic bodies[198].

17-18. Then Brahmā and Viṣṇu, the lord of the worlds said — "The time for killing the Asuras has arrived, O great God. The three cities of the sons of Tāraka have come into one unified whole. O lord, please perform the task of the Gods.

19. O lord of the gods please discharge the arrow and reduce the three cities to ashes lest they should be separated again."

20. Then stringing the bow tight and fixing the arrow Pāśupata worthy of worship, he thought of the Tripuras.

21. Then lord Śiva, an expert in excellent divine sports for some reason looked at it with contempt.

22. Śiva is capable of reducing the three cities to ashes in a trice, Still lord Śiva, the goal of the good bides his time.

23. The lord of gods is capable of burning the three worlds by a single glance. O lord, for the flourish of our fame you shall discharge the arrow.

24. On being eulogised by Viṣṇu, Brahmā and other gods, lord Śiva desired to reduce the three cities to ashes with his arrow.

25-26. In the auspicious moment called Abhilāṣa he drew the bow and made a wonderful and unbearable twanging sound. He addressed the great Asuras and proclaimed his own name. Śiva discharged an arrow that had the refulgence of countless suns.

27. The arrow which was constituted by Viṣṇu and whose steel head was fire god blazed forth and burnt the three Asuras who lived in the three cities. It thereby removed their sins.

28. The three cities reduced to ashes fell on the earth girt by the four oceans[199].

198. See Note 89 P. 132.

199. In ancient Indian literature, the four oceans are said to be surrounding the earth on four sides. Most probably they represent the Arabian sea in the West, the Indian ocean in the south, the Bay of Bengal in the East and the sea of Japan in the North.

29. Since they had refrained from the worship of Śiva, hundreds of Asuras were burnt by the fire generated by the arrow. They cried "Hā Hā" in distress.

30. Tārakākṣa was burnt along with his two brothers. He remembered his lord Śiva who is favourably disposed to his devotees.

31. Lamenting in diverse ways and looking up to lord Śiva, he mentally appealed to him.

Tārakākṣa said:—

32. "O Śiva, you are known to be pleased with us, if at any future hour you burn us, you will do so along with our kinsfolk. Let it be in accordance with this truth.

33. What is difficult and inaccessible to the gods and Asuras has been secured by us. Let our intellect be purified by our thoughts on you in every birth."

34. O sage, at the bidding of Śiva, those Asuras were burnt and reduced to ashes by the fire[200] even as they were muttering thus.

35. Other Asuras too, children and old men were completely burnt out, O Vyāsa, at the bidding of Śiva and speedily reduced to ashes.

36. Just as the universe is burnt at the end of a Kalpa so also every thing and every one there, whether woman or man or vehicles, was reduced to ashes by that fire.

37. Some women were forced to leave their husbands necking them and were burnt by the fire. Some were sleeping, some were intoxicated and some were exhausted after their sexual dalliance. All were burnt.

38-39. Some who were partially burnt woke up and rushed here and there. They fell unconscious and fainted. There was not even a minute particle whether mobile or immobile which escaped unscathed by that terrible Tripura fire excepting Maya, the imperishable Viśvakarman of the Asuras.

200. For the detailed description of the burning of Tripurī compare Matsya P. Ch. 188.

40. Those who were not opposed to the Gods were saved by Śiva's brilliance, those who devoutly sought refuge in lord Śiva at the time of adversity.

41. Whether Asuras or other beings those whose collective activities were not destructive were saved; others of contrary activities were burnt in fire.

42. Hence, all possible efforts shall be made by good men to avoid despicable activities whereby people waste away themselves.

43. Let there be no predicament to any as it happened in regard to the residents of the three cities. This is the opinion of all. By chance if it happens, let it.

44. Those who worshipped Śiva along with their family attained Gaṇapati's region, thanks to the worship of Śiva.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

(*The Gods' prayer*)

Vyāsa said:—

1. O son of Brahmā, of great intellect, O most excellent among the devotees of Śiva, you are blessed. When the three cities were burnt what did the gods do ?

2. Where did Maya who was spared go ? Where did the ascetics go ? Please narrate all, if it relates to Śiva's story.

Sūta said :—

3. On hearing the words of Vyāsa, Sanatkumāra the holy son of the creator remembered the feet of Śiva and spoke.

Sanatkumāra said: –

4. Listen O Vyāsa, son of Parāśara, and of great intellect, to the sin-destroying story of the great lord, who follows worldly conventions.

5. When the three cities of Asuras were utterly burnt, the Gods became surprised.

6. The gods including Indra, Viṣṇu and others became silent and bewildered on seeing the excessively brilliant Śiva.

7-8. On merely seeing the terrible form of Śiva, dazzling the ten quarters, resembling countless suns in refulgence and on a par with the fire at the hour of dissolution, and also the goddess Pārvatī, the daughter of Himavat, the illustrious gods stood humbly in their fright.

9. On seeing the army of the gods terrified, the excellent sages did not say anything. They stood all round and bowed.

10-11. Then Brahmā too who was excessively afraid on seeing Śiva's terrible form, was delighted at heart and fervently prayed along with the gods. Viṣṇu who was also afraid prayed to Śiva the lord of the Gods, the slayer of the Tripuras, who was accompanied by his consort Pārvatī, the lord who is subservient to his devotees.

Brahmā said: —

12. "O lord of the gods, O supreme lord, bestower of blessings to the devotees, be pleased, O bestower of wholesome blessings to all the gods.

13. Be pleased, O lord of the worlds, be pleased. O bestower of bliss. Be pleased, O lord Śiva. Be pleased, O supreme lord.

14. Obeisance to you, of the form of Oṁkāra, O great lord who enable the devotees to cross the ocean of existence by your very form. Be pleased, O lord of gods, O destroyer of the Tripuras, O supreme lord.

15. O Śiva, O favourite of your devotees. Obeisance to you, the lord of many names. Obeisance to you, free from attributes, O you who are greater than Prakṛti and Puruṣa.

16. Obeisance to you, free from aberrations, the eternal, the ever satiated, the resplendent, the unsullied, the divine one of three attributes.

17. Obeisance to you, possessed of attributes. Obeisance to you, the lord of heaven. Obeisance to the calm, trident-bearing Śiva.

18. Obeisance to the omniscient, to one who is the refuge of all. Obeisance to you born in a trice. Obeisance to Vāmadeva, Rudra, the Puruṣa, accessible to the good.

19. Obeisance to Aghora, to one easily served.

Obeisance to you, subservient to the devotees. Obeisance to Īśāna, the most excellent, the bestower of bliss to his devotees.

20. O great lord, save, save us all the frightened gods. By burning the three cities, the gods have been satisfied and contented."

21. After eulogising thus, the gods severally bowed to him. The delighted gods, Brahmā and others, bowed to lord Śiva.

22. Then Brahmā himself eulogised lord Śiva the destroyer of the Tripuras after bowing to him with stooping shoulders and palms joined in reverence.

Brahmā said: —

23. "O holy lord, lord of the gods, O slayer of the Tripuras, O Śiva, O great lord, let my devotion to you remain eternal.

24. O Śiva, let me always remain your charioteer. O lord of the gods, O supreme lord, be favourable to me always."

Sanatkumāra said:—

25. After thus eulogising Śiva who is favourably disposed to his devotees, with humility, the liberal hearted Brahmā stopped and stood there with stooping shoulders and palms joined in reverence.

26. Lord Viṣṇu too bowed to lord Śiva. With palms joined in reverence, he eulogised lord Śiva.

Viṣṇu said:—

27. O overlord of the Gods, O great lord, O merciful one, O kinsman of the distressed. Be pleased, O supreme lord. Be merciful, O favourite of those who bow to you.

28. Obeisance to you devoid of the attributes. Again obeisance to you possessed of attributes. Again obeisance to you of the form of Prakrti and Puruṣa.

29. Obeisance to you of the form of attributes. Obeisance to the soul of the universe. Obeisance to you who love devotion. Obeisance to Śiva the calm one, the great soul.

30. Obeisance to Sadāśiva. Obeisance to Śiva, the lord of the worlds. Let my devotion to you steadily increase.

Sanatkumāra said:—

31. After saying this, lord Viṣṇu the most excellent of the great devotees of Śiva stopped. Then all the Gods bowed to him and spoke to lord Śiva.

The gods said:—

32. O lord of gods, O great god, O Śiva, the merciful. Be pleased O lord of the worlds. Be pleased O supreme lord.

33. Be pleased. You are the creator of every thing. We bow to you joyously. Let our devotion to you be steady and endless.

Sanatkumāra said:—

34. Thus eulogised by Brahmā, Viṣṇu and the Gods, Śiva the benefactor of the worlds, the delighted lord of the gods, replied.

Śiva said :—

35. O Brahmā, O Viṣṇu, O gods, I am very much pleased with you all. All of you consider carefully and then let me know the boon you desire.

Sanatkumāra said:—

36. On hearing these words mentioned by Śiva, O excellent sage, all the Gods replied delightedly.

The gods said:—

37-38. O lord, if you are pleased, if the boon is to be granted by you to us, O lord of the master of gods, after knowing that we the gods are your slaves, then O most excellent deity, be pleased to appear always whenever misery befalls us and destroy the misery.

Sanatkumāra said:—

39. Thus requested simultaneously by Brahmā, Viṣṇu and the gods, Rudra was pleased in his mind and he said "Let it be ever so.

40. I am delighted by these hymns. O gods, I shall confer on those who read, recite and hear these hymns whatever they crave for".

41. Saying this, the delighted Śiva the remover of the distress of gods, gave them every thing that was highly delightful to all the gods.

CHAPTER TWELVE

(*The Gods go back to their abodes*)

Sanatkumāra said:—

1. In the meantime the Asura Maya who was not burnt due to the strength of grace, came there on seeing Śiva delighted.

2. With great delight he bowed to Śiva and other gods. With palms joined in reverence and with stooping shoulders he bowed to Śiva again.

3. Then he got up. Maya the foremost among the Asuras, with his mind full of devotion and voice choked with ėmotions of love he eulogised facing Śiva.

Maya said:—

4. O great lord, lord of the Gods and favourably disposed to your devotees, O Śiva, you are in the form of the wish-yielding Kalpa tree and devoid of special leaning to any side.

5. Obeisance to you O splendour-formed, obeisance to you omniformed; obeisance to you, O sanctified soul; obeisance to you, O holy one.

6. Obeisance to you of variegated - forms; to you, the eternal one; obeisance to you who extend beyond all forms. Obeisance to you of divine forms, shapes, and features.

7. Obeisance to the destroyer of the distress of those who bow to you; obeisance to the welfare-hearted; to the creator, sustainer and annihilator of the three worlds.

8. O Śiva, O consort of Pārvatī, obeisance to you who are accessible through devotion of the devotees; obeisance

to the compassionate and the bestower of the good fruits of penance.

9. O great lord, fond of eulogy, I know not how to eulogise you. O lord of all, be pleased. Save me who have sought refuge in you."

Sanatkumāra said:—

10. On hearing this eulogy of Maya, O excellent brahmin, lord Śiva, was delighted and he spoke to Maya eagerly.

Śiva said:—

11. O Maya, I am delighted. O excellent Asura speak out the boon you wish to have. There is no doubt. I shall grant you what you desire.

Sanatkumāra said:—

12. On hearing the auspicious words of Śiva, Maya the foremost among the Asuras spoke after bowing to the lord with stooping shoulders and palms joined in reverence.

Maya said:—

13. "O great lord, lord of the Gods, if you are delighted and if I deserve the grant of a boon please grant me parmanent devotion to you.

14. O supreme lord, grant me comradeship with your devotees for ever, compassion towards the distressed and indifference towards the wicked living beings.

15. O lord Śiva, let there be no demonaic instinct in me at any time. O lord, let me be fearless for ever engrossed in your auspicious worship."

Sanatkumāra said:—

16. On being thus requested, Śiva the great lord, who is favourably disposed to his devotees and was in a delightful mood replied to Maya.

Lord Śiva said :—

17. Ō excellent Asuras you are my devotees and are

blessed. You are free from aberrations. All the boons desired by you are granted now.

18. At my bidding, you go to the region Vitala,[201] more beautiful than heaven. Go in the company of your family and kinsmen.

19. You stay there without fear. Be devout always. At my bidding you will never have demonaic instinct.

Sanatkumāra said :—

20. Receiving this behest of Śiva, the great soul with bowing head and paying homage to him and to the gods he went to Vitala.

21. In the meantime those heretics of tonsured heads came there, knelt before Viṣṇu, Brahmā and others and spoke.

22. O gods, where shall we go ? What shall we do now ? We are ready to carry out your behests. Please command us quickly.

23. O Viṣṇu, O Brahmā, O gods, wicked deeds have been performed by us. We have destroyed the devotion to Śiva of all the Asuras who were great devotees of Śiva.

24. We will have to stay in hell for a countless Kalpas. Certainly there is no redemption for us that have offended devotees of Śiva.

25. But it was in accordance with your desire that this wicked deed was perpetrated. Please tell us the mode of atoning for the same. We have sought refuge in you.

Sanatkumāra said :—

26. On hearing their words Viṣṇu, Brahmā and other gods spoke to the tonsured-heads who stood in front with joined palms.

Viṣṇu and others said :—

27. "O tonsured ones, you need not be afraid at all. These excellent activities have taken place at the bidding of Śiva.

201. This is the second of the seven regions descending from the earth. Cf. Note 210 P. 247.

28. Since you are the servants of Śiva and have carried out the activities conducive to the welfare of the gods and the sages, no mishap shall ever befall you bringing you to distress.

29. Śiva performs deeds conducive to the welfare of the gods and the sages. He is pleased with those who work for the welfare of the gods and sages. No mishap befalls those who work for the welfare of the gods and sages.

30. From now onwards in the Kali age those who follow this cult will be faced with disastrous results. We tell you the truth. There is no doubt about it.

31. O brave tonsured heads, till the advent of the Kali age, you shall stay incognito in the desert region.[202] That is my behest.

32. When the Kali age begins, you can propagate your cult. In the Kali age deluded fools will follow your cult.

33. Thus bidden by the great gods, O great sage, the tonsured heads bowed to them and went to their allotted abode.

34-35. Then lord Śiva, the great Yogin after burning the residents of the three cities felt contented. He was duly worshipped by Brahmā and others. Then the lord, after completing the task of the gods, vanished from the scene accompanied by his Gaṇas, goddess Pārvatī and the sons.

36. When lord Śiva had vanished with his followers, the fortress too vanished along with the bow, arrows, chariot and other things.

37-38. Then Brahmā, Viṣṇu, the gods, sages, Gandharvas, Kinnaras, Nāgas, serpents, celestial damsels and the delighted men went to their abodes praising the glory of Śiva. After reaching their abodes they were highly delighted.

39. Thus the exalted narrative of the moon-crested lord indicative of the annihilation of Tripuras coupled with the great divine sports has been narrated to you.

202. The desert (Maru) lying to the north-west of Gujarat and to the north of Dvārakā is also called the Thar or Rājaputānā desert. It includes a portion of Mārwar and Jodhpur area also. It is said to be famous for its camels. See Sircar GAMI. Cf.

गुर्जरपूर्वभागात्तु द्वारका यस्य दक्षिणे ।
मरुदेशो महेशानि ! उष्ट्रोत्पत्तिपरायणः ॥

शक्तिसङ्गमतन्त्र III. 7. 19.

40. It is conducive to wealth, fame, and longevity. It increases prosperity and possession of food-grains. It yields heavenly pleasure and salvation. What else do you wish to hear ?

41. He who reads and hears the exalted narrative will enjoy all pleasures here and attain salvation hereafter.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

(*The Resuscitation of Indra in the context of the destruction of Jalandhara*)

Vyāsa said:—

1. O holy lord, son of Brahmā, it has been heard by me before that the lord Śiva killed the great Asura Jalandhara.

2. O intelligent one, please narrate the story of the moon-crested lord in detail. Who can be satiated with listening to the spotless glory of the lord ?

Sūta said:—

3. On being requested thus by Vyāsa, the great sage and son of Brahmā of eloquent speech spoke the following significant words without excitement.

Sanatkumāra said:—

4. O sage, once Bṛhaspati and Indra went to Kailāsa with great devotion, to see lord Śiva.

5-6. Coming to know of the arrival of Bṛhaspati and Indra eager to see him, lord Śiva wished to test their knowledge. Accordingly, the lord, the excellent goal of the good, stood blocking their path in the naked form with matted hair and beaming face.

7-9. Bṛhaspati and Indra were walking on gleefully. On their way they saw this wonderful person of huge size. He was quiet and composed and very refulgent with matted hair on his head. He was fair-complexioned with long arms and wide chest. He was terrible to look at. Without realising that the person who stood there blocking their path

was Śiva himself, Indra who was proud of his authority said to him.

Indra said :—

10. O, who are you ? Where have you come from ? What is your name ? Tell me truly. Is the lord Śiva in his apartment or has he gone anywhere ?

Sanatkumāra said :—

11. O sage, on being asked by Indra thus, he did not say anything. Indra asked him again. But the naked person did not say anything.

12. Indra, the supreme lord of the worlds, asked again. The lord the great Yagin who assumes forms variously kept quiet.

13. The naked lord, though asked repeatedly by Indra, did not say anything, for he wanted to test the knowledge of Indra.

14. Then the lord of Gods, proud of the wealth of the three worlds, became enraged. Rebuking the lord with matted hair he spoke these words.

Indra said:—

15. "O evil-minded one, though asked you did not reply to me. Hence I am going to kill you with my thunderbolt. Who can save you?"

Sanatkumāra said:—

16. After saying this and looking at him ferociously Indra raised his thunderbolt in order to kill him.

17. On seeing Indra lifting up his thunderbolt, Śiva prevented the fall of the thunderbolt by making his hand benumbed.

18. Then Śiva became furious. His eyes became terrible. He blazed with his burning splendour.

19. Then Indra burnt within himself by the benumbing of his arm like a serpent whose exploits had been curbed by pronouncing magical formulas.[203]

203. For the similarity of idea and verbal expression, compare Kālidāsa's Raghuvaṁśa II. 32.

20. On seeing him resplendent, Bṛhaspati realised immediately that he was lord Śiva himself and bowed to him.

21. Then the noble-minded Bṛhaspati joined his palms in reverence. He prostrated before him on the ground and began to eulogise the lord.

Bṛhaspati said:—

22. Obeisance to Śiva, the chief lord of the gods, the supreme soul, the three-eyed, possessed of matted hair.

23. Obeisance to the succouring lord of the distressed, the destroyer of Andhaka[204] and the Tripuras, and identical with Brahmā, the Parameṣṭhin.

24. Obeisance to Śiva of odd eyes, of diverse, deformed and surpassing features, going beyond all forms.

25. Obeisance to the destroyer of sacrifice of Dakṣa, to the bestower of fruits of sacrifice, identical with sacrifice and the initiator of the greatest rites.

26. Obeisance to Śiva the annihilator of Time, of the form of Time, the wearer of black serpents, the great lord and the omnipresent.

27. Obeisance to the destroyer of Brahmā's head,[205] the one eulogised by Brahmā and the moon. Obeisance to you favourably disposed to Brahmins. Obeisance to you the great soul.

28. You are the fire, the wind, the ether, the waters, the earth, the sun, the moon, the stars, and the solar system.

29. You alone are Viṣṇu, Brahmā, and eulogised by them; you are the great lord, the sages Sanaka etc. You are Nārada the great saint.

30. You alone are the lord of all the worlds, the soul of the universe. You are converging in everything and different from everything; you alone are greater than Prakṛti.

204. Andhaka was an Asura of great prowess who became so arrogant that he attempted to abduct both Śiva and Pārvatī. A great battle was fought between the two in the Mahākāla forest of Avanti. Śiva slew the Asura and obtained the appellation 'the slayer of Andhaka' for himself.

205. See Note 43 P. 58.

31. With the Rajas attribute. you alone create the worlds assuming the name Brahmā. You are identical with Viṣṇu in Sattva attribute and you protect the entire universe.

32. With the Tamas attribute you assume the form of Śiva, O great God and you alone devour the universe composed of five elements.

33. With the strength of meditating on you, O creator of the universe, the sun blazes, the moon exudes nectar and the wind blows.

34. O Śiva, with the strength of meditating on you, the clouds shower water. Indra protects the worlds like his sons.

35. With the strength of meditating on you, the clouds, the gods and the great sages carry on their tasks. They are afraid of you.

36. O Śiva, by serving your lotus like feet, the people in the world do not honour the gods and they enjoy the prosperity of the world.

37. By serving your lotus like feet the people attain the supreme goal inaccessible to every one and unattainable even to Yogins.

Sanatkumāra said:—

38. After eulogising Śiva, the benefactor of the worlds thus Bṛhaspati made Indra fall at the feet of Śiva.

39. After making Indra, lord of the gods, fall at his feet with bowed head, Bṛhaspati humbly spoke these words to Śiva with bowed head.

Bṛhaspati said:—

40. O great lord, favourable to the distressed, please raise up Indra fallen at your feet. Please quieten the anger rising from your eyes.

41. O great lord, be pleased. Protect Indra who has sought refuge in you. Let this fire rising from the eye in the forehead be rendered calm.

Sanatkumāra said:—

42. On hearing these words of Bṛhaspati, Śiva, the

lord of Gods, the ocean of mercy, spoke in a thundering stentorian voice.

Lord Śiva said:—

43. O Bṛhaspati, how can I take up the fury that has already come out of my eye? A serpent does not wear again the slough that has been cast off.

Sanatkumāra said:—

44. On hearing these words of Śiva, Bṛhaspati's mind was agitated with fear and he spoke dejectedly.

Bṛhaspati said :—

45. O holy lord, indeed the devotees should be pitied always. O Śiva, thus please make your name Bhaktavatsala (favourably disposed towards the devotees) true.

46. O lord of gods, you deserve to cast elsewhere the fierce brilliance. O uplifter of all devotees, raise up Indra.

Sanatkumāra said :—

47. On being addressed thus by Bṛhaspati the delighted Śiva, the destroyer of the distress of those who bow to him and the one named Bhaktavatsala replied thus to Bṛhaspati.

Śiva said:—

48. O dear one, I am delighted by your eulogy. I shall grant you the excellent boon. Henceforth you shall be famous as Enlivener because you have conferred life on Indra.

49. I shall cast off this fire born of my eye in the forehead intended to kill Indra lest it should afflict him.

50. On saying this he held that wonderful brilliance born of the eye in the forehead[206] and cast it off in the briny ocean.

51. Then the lord Rudra of great divine sports vanish-

206. Śiva is represented as the three-eyed God. His third eye which stands in the middle of his forehead is very destructive. It reduced Kāma to ashes.

This eye usually remains closed. But when it opens, its glance works havoc. At the periodical dissolution of the universe, it destroys all the gods and created beings.

ed from the scene. Bṛhaspati and Indra were relieved of their fright and they became happy.

52. After having the immediate perception of Śiva for which they had come here, Bṛhaspati and Indra became contented and went away to their abodes joyously.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

(*The birth of Jalandhara and his marriage*)

Vyāsa said :—

1. O omniscient Sanatkumāra, son of Brahmā, obeisance be to you. This wonderful story of Śiva, the great soul, has been heard.

2. O sage, when the brilliance born of the eye in the forehead had been cast off into the briny ocean, O dear sir, what happened ? Please narrate it quickly.

Sanatkumāra said:—

3. O dear one of great intellect, listen to the extremely wonderful sport of Śiva, on hearing which with faith a devotee attains the goal of Yogins.

4. The brilliance of Śiva born of the eye in the forehead and cast off into the briny sea[207] immediately assumed the form of a boy.

5. At the confluence of the river Gaṅgā and the ocean, the boy of terrific features cried loudly.

6. At the sound of the crying boy, the earth quaked frequently. The heaven and the Satyaloka became deafened at the noise.

7. All the worlds were frightened. The guardians of the quarters became agitated in the mind

8. O dear holy one, O great brahmin, the entire world including the mobile and immobile quaked at the cries of the boy.

9. Then the distressed gods and the sages immediately

207. The ocean of salt (lavaṇāmbhodhi) stands to the west of Bhāratavarṣa and is identical with the Arabian sea. The confluence of the Indus and this ocean (Sindhu-Sāgara-saṅgama) is the place where Jalandhara was born.

sought refuge in Brahmā the grandfather and preceptor of the worlds.

10. After going there, those sages and the gods including Indra bowed to and eulogised Brahmā and spoke these words.

The gods said:—

11. "This mysterious sound has arisen. O lord of worlds, O lord of gods, we are frightened. O great Yogin please quell it."

Sanatkumāra said :—

12. On hearing their words, Brahmā the grandfather of the worlds wished to go there. He was perplexed as to what it was.

13. Then Brahmā descended from Satyaloka to the Earth along with the gods. Then he went to the ocean desirous of knowing what it was.

14. When Brahmā the grandfather of the worlds came there, he saw the boy in the lap of the ocean.

15. On seeing Brahmā coming, the ocean assuming the form of a god bowed to him and placed the boy in his lap.

16. Then the surprised Brahmā spoke these words to the ocean—"O ocean, tell me quickly about the parentage of this boy."

Sanatkumāra said:—

17. On hearing the words of Brahmā, the ocean was delighted. After bowing to and eulogising him with palms joined in reverence he replied to Prajāpati Brahmā.

The ocean said :—

18. "O Brahmā, O lord of the worlds, this boy was suddenly seen in the confluence of the river Gaṅgā. I do not know about the origin of this boy.

19. O preceptor of the universe, you perform the post-natal rites for this boy. O creator, let me know your predictions about his future according to his horoscope"

Sanatkumāra said:—

20. Even as the ocean said these words, the son of the ocean caught hold of the neck of Brahmā and shook it several times.

21. In due course tears came out of the eyes of Brahmā, the creator of all the worlds, afflicted by the joggling and jolting.

22. Brahmā somehow extricated himself from the grip of the son of the ocean by means of his hands and spoke to the ocean.

Brahmā said:—

23. "O ocean, listen, I shall narrate the future as predicted from the horoscope, entirely. Be attentive please.

24. Since he was able to make my eyes water let him be famous in the name of Jalandhara.

25-26. He will become a youth now itself. He will become a master of all sacred lores, very valorous, courageous, heroic, invincible and majestic like you. Like Kārttikeya he will be the conqueror of all in battles. He will shine with all sorts of prosperity.

27. This boy will become the emperor of Asuras. He will conquer even Viṣṇu. He will face defeat from no quarter.

28. He cannot be slain by any one except Śiva. He will return to the place from where he sprang up.

29. His wife will be a chaste lady who will increase good fortune. She will be exquisitely beautiful in every limb. She will be an ocean of good conduct and will speak pleasing words.

Sanatkumāra said:—

30. After saying so he called Śukra and performed his coronation. Brahmā then took leave of the ocean and disappeared.

31. Thereafter the ocean with blooming eyes saw the son, took him to his abode joyously.

32. With a joyous heart he nurtured the boy with diverse great means. The boy grew into a beautiful youth of exquisite limbs and wonderful splendour.

33. Then the ocean invited the great Asura Kālanemi and requested him to give his daughter named Vṛndā in marriage to his son.

34. O sage, the heroic Asura Kālanemi,[208] foremost among the Asuras, intelligent and efficient in his activities, welcomed the request of the ocean.

35. He gave his beloved daughter to Jalandhara, the brave son of the ocean, in marriage performing the nuptial rites according to the Brāhma style.*

36. O sage, great festivities were held in the marriage. The rivers and Asuras were happy.

37. The ocean too became extremely happy seeing his son united to a bride. In accordance with the rules he made charitable gifts to the brahmins and others.

38. Those Asuras who had been formerly defeated by the gods and had sought shelter in Pātāla came fearlessly to the Earth and resorted to him.

39. Kālanemi and other Asuras were pleased after giving the daughter in marriage to the son of the ocean. In order to defeat the gods they resorted to him.

40. The heroic son of the ocean, Jalandhara, foremost among the Asura warriors, received a very beautiful lady as his wife and he ruled over the kingdom with the support of Śukra.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

(*The fight between the gods and Jalandhara*)

1. Once the son of the ocean, the noble-hearted husband of Vṛndā, was seated along with his wife and the Asuras.

2. The brilliant Bhārgava came there joyously illuminating the ten quarters as the embodied brilliance.

3. On seeing the preceptor coming, the Asuras were

208. Kālanemi, the great Asura, was the son of Virocana and the great-grandson of Hiraṇyakaśipu. His daughter Vṛndā was married to Jalandhara.

*Cp. MS. iii. 27.

delighted in their minds and bowed to him. The son of the ocean too respectfully bowed to him.

4. After bestowing his benediction on them, Bhārgava, the storehouse of splendour, sat on a beautiful seat. They too resumed their seats as before.

5. Then the heroic son of the ocean, Jalandhara, saw his Assembly and was delighted to observe that his sway was unmitigated.

6. Seeing the headless Rāhu[209] seated there, the son of the ocean, the emperor of the Asuras, immediately asked Bhārgava.

Jalandhara said:—

7. O lord, by whom was this done to Rāhu ? By whom was his head cut? Please tell me, O preceptor, everything in detail as it had happened.

Sanatkumāra said:—

8. On hearing the words of the ocean's son, Bhārgava remembered the lotus-like feet of Śiva and replied exactly as it had happened.

Bhārgava said:—

9. O Jalandhara, O great hero, O benefactor of the Asuras, listen to the account. I shall relate everything exactly as it had happened.

10. Once there was a strong hero Bali, the son of Virocana and great-grandson of Hiraṇyakaśipu. He was foremost among the virtuous.

11. The gods including Indra being defeated by him sought refuge in Viṣṇu. Eager to gain their ends they told him all details.

12. O dear, at his bidding, the gods, very clever in deception, made an alliance with the Asuras, to further their own interest.

13. All those gods, the assistants of Viṣṇu churned

209. The Asura Rāhu, son of Vipracitti and Siṁhikā, is known as the guardian of the south-west quarter. It is said that when the gods produced the Amṛta by churning the ocean, he disguised himself as a god and drank some of it. But he was detected by the gods and produced before Viṣṇu who cut off his head.

the ocean eagerly for the gain of nectar, along with the Asuras.

14. The enemies of the Asuras extracted jewels from the ocean. The gods seized the nectar and drank it deceitfully.

15. Then the gods including Indra increased in strength and prowess by the drinking of the nectar and harassed the Asuras with the assistance of Viṣṇu.

16. This Viṣṇu who is always a partisan of Indra, cut off the head of Rāhu as he was drinking the nectar along with the gods.

Sanatkumāra said:—

17-18. Thus Bhārgava narrated in detail the story of the headless Rāhu, of the churning of the ocean pursued by the gods for the gain of nectar, of the removal of the jewels, of the drinking of the Amṛta by the gods and of the harassment to the Asuras.

19. Then on hearing about the churning of his father, the heroic son of the ocean, the valorous Jalandhara became furious and his eyes turned red with anger.

20. Then he called his excellent emissary Ghasmara and told him everything what the wise preceptor had said to him.

21. He then lovingly honoured the clever emissary in various ways, assured him of protection and sent him to Indra as his messenger.

22. Ghasmara, the intelligent emissary of Jalandhara, hastened to heaven[210] where all the gods were present.

23. After going there, the emissary entered the assembly of the gods.[211] With his head kept straight as a token of haughtiness he spoke to lord Indra.

Ghasmara said:—

24. Jalandhara, the son of the ocean, is the lord and emperor of all the Asuras. He is excessively heroic and valorous. He has the support and assistance of Bhārgava.

210. Triviṣṭapa or Tripiṣṭapa is the city of Indra supposed to be situated on Mount Meru.

211. Sudharmā is the hall of Indra. It is the unrivalled gem of princely courts. See H. M.

25. I am his emissary. I have been sent by him. I have come to you here. My name is Ghasmara but I am not a devourer.

26. He is of exalted intellect. His behest has never been defied. He has defeated all the enemies of Asuras. Please listen to what he says.

Jalandhara said:—

27. "O base god, why was my father, the ocean, churned by you with the mountain ? Why were all the jewels of my father taken away ?

28. What you have done is not proper. Return all of them to me immediately. Pondering over this, come along with the gods and seek refuge in me.

29. Otherwise, O base god, you will have a great cause to fear. You will run the risk of the annihilation of your kingdom."

Sanatkumāra said:—

30. On hearing the words of the messenger, Indra, the the lord of the gods, was bewildered. Remembering the previous incidents he was frightened as well as angry. He spoke to him thus.

31. Indra said. He gave shelter to the mountains who were terribly afraid of me. Others too, some of my enemies, the Asuras, were formerly saved by him.

32 It was due to this that I took away his jewels. Those who oppose me can never remain happy. I am telling you the truth.

33. Formerly the Asura Śaṅkha[212] the son of the ocean was stupid enough to be inimical to me. He was spared by me because he was associated with saintly men.

34. But when his predilection became sinful and he became violent towards saintly men, he was killed in the interior of the ocean by Viṣṇu, my younger brother.

212. The Asura Śaṅkha was killed by Viṣṇu for his defiant and oppressive attitude.

35. Hence O messenger, go immediately and explain to the Asura, son of the ocean, our purpose for churning the

Sanatkumāra said:—

36. Dismissed thus by Indra, the intelligent emissary Ghasmara hastened to the place where the heroic Jalandhara was present.

37. All the words thus spoken by Indra were narrated to the king of Asuras by the intelligent emissary.

38. On hearing it, the lips of the Asura throbbed with anger. Desirous of conquering the gods he exerted himself immediately.

39. In that enterprise of the lord of the Asuras, countless Asuras from all the quarters and the nether region took part and helped him.

40. Then the extremely heroic and valorous son of the ocean set forth with countless generals, Śumbha, Niśumbha and others.

41. Very soon, he reached the heaven along with his force. He blew his conch. All the heroic soldiers roared.

42. After going to heaven he stationed himself in Nandana. In the midst of all his forces he roared like a lion.

43. On seeing a vast army surrounding the city, the gods came out of Amarāvatī fully equipped with armour for the battle.

44-45. Then a battle between the armies of the gods and Asuras ensued. They rushed against one another with iron clubs, arrows, maces, axes and spears. They hit one another. Within a short time both the armies began to wade through streams of blood.

46. In that battle, the ground shone like the dusk with clouds scattered all round, for it was strewn with elephants, horses, chariots and foot-soldiers. Some were killed and others were being killed.

47. Bhārgava resuscitated the Asuras killed in the battle with the Vidyā of Amṛtajīvinī and drops of water infused with mantras.

48. The sage Aṅgiras[213] too resuscitated the gods in the battle with the divine herbs frequently brought from the mountain Droṇa.[214]

49. Jalandhara saw the gods restored to life again in the battle. He then spoke angrily to Bhārgava.

Jalandhara said:—

50. "The gods have been killed by me. How do they rise up again? The Vidyā of Sañjīvinī* has not been heard by me to exist elsewhere."

Sanatkumāra said:—

51. On hearing these words of the son of the ocean, the delighted Bhārgava, the preceptor, replied to Jalandhara.

Bhārgava said:—

52. "Aṅgiras is bringing divine herbs from the mountain Droṇa and enlivening the gods. O dear, know my words to be true.

53. O dear, if you wish for victory listen to my auspicious suggestion. Immediately you shall uproot the mountain Droṇa with your arms and hurl it into the ocean."

Sanatkumāra said:—

54. Thus addressed by his preceptor Bhārgava, the lord of the Asuras, hastened to the lofty mountain.

55. With his powerful arms, the Asura brought the mountain Droṇa and hurled it immediately into the ocean. There is nothing wonderful and mysterious in regard to the splendour of Śiva.

56. The great hero, the son of the ocean, took a vast

213. Bṛhaspati is called Aṅgiras. In fact, Aṅgiras, born of the coals from the semen of Prajāpati was the father of Bṛhaspati

214. It is a mythical mountain abounding in herbs efficacious for restoring the dead to life. It was thrown in the ocean by Jalandhara to prevent the gods using its herbs for the resuscitation of their dead. However there is a mountain of this name in Kumaon, 16 miles from Ranikhet in the district of Almora. See Bajpai, G E.

*Amṛtajīvinī was a secret lore that restored the dead to life. This was the exclusive possession of Bhārgava (Śukra), the preceptor of the Asuras.

army with him, came to the battle ground and began to kill the gods with various weapons.

57. On seeing the gods being killed Bṛhaspati went to the mountain Droṇa. Then he, the object of praise and worship by the gods, did not see the mountain there.

58. On realising that the mountain Droṇa had been removed by the Asuras, Bṛhaspati was terrified. He returned and said dejectedly.

Bṛhaspati said:—

59. "O gods, run away, all of you. There is no trace of the great mountain Droṇa. Certainly it has been destroyed by the Asura, the son of the ocean.

60. Jalandhara is a great Asura. He cannot be conquered since he is born of a part of Śiva. He will pound all the gods.

61. His power has been understood by me as he is self-born. O gods, all of you remember the act of offence to Śiva perpetrated by Indra.

Sanatkumāra said:—

62. On hearing these words uttered by the preceptor of the gods, they abandoned all hopes of victory. They became excessively terrified.

63. All the gods including Indra, struck by the king of the Asuras all round, lost courage and fled in all directions.

64. On seeing the gods routed, the Asura, Jalandhara, the son of the ocean, entered Amarāvatī[215] with sounds of victory from the conches and drums.

65. When the Asura entered the city, Indra and other gods entered the cavern of the golden mountain Meru and remained there. They had been extremely harrassed by the Asuras.

66. O sage, at the same time the Asura appointed Śumbha and other Asuras severally in the places of authority of Indra and others. He then went into the cavern of the golden mountain.

215. It is the mythical capital of Indra's heaven, situated on the golden mount Meru.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

(*The battle of the gods*)

Sanatkumāra said:—

1. On seeing the Asura coming again, the gods including Indra trembled with fear. They fled together.

2. With Brahmā at the head they went to Vaikuṇṭha. All of them including Prajāpati eulogised Viṣṇu after bowing down to him.

The gods said:—

3. O Hṛṣīkeśa of long arms, O lord, O slayer of Madhu, O lord of gods, Obeisance to you, O destroyer of all Asuras.

4. O Viṣṇu, of the form of fish[216] who redeemed the Vedas through king Satyavrata, obeisance to you who sport about in the ocean of Dissolution.

5. Obeisance to you of the form of Tortoise who bore the mountain Mandara of the gods who were attempting to churn the ocean.

6. Obeisance to you O holy lord, of the form of Boar. Obeisance to you who hold the earth, the support of people. Obeisance to Viṣṇu.

7. Obeisance to you, the Dwarf. Obeisance to Viṣṇu the younger brother of Indra, the lord who deceived the king of Asuras in the guise of a Brahmin.

8. Obeisance to Paraśurāma who exterminated the Kṣattriyas, who rendered help to your mother. Obeisance to you who are angry and inimical to the evil beings.

9. Obeisance to Rāma who delighted the worlds and who set the limits of decent behaviour. Obeisance to you the destroyer of Rāvaṇa and the lord of Sītā.

10. Obeisance to you of hidden knowledge; to Kṛṣṇa the great Ātman; the sportive paramour of Rādhā; Obeisance to him of diverse divine sports.

216. The god's eulogy to Viṣṇu enumerates the various forms of Viṣṇu including his nine incarnations, viz Matsya, Kūrma, Vārāha, Vāmana, Paraśurāma, Rāma, Kṛṣṇa, Buddha and Kalki. But it is not intelligible why it shall omit his Nṛsiṁha incarnation. Most probably some lines seem to be missing here.

11. Obeisance to the preceptor of Yoga; Obeisance to you, O lord of Lakṣmī, of the form of Jaina and Bauddha; to you of hidden body and features and the censurer of the Vedas.

12. Obeisance to you of the form of Kalki; the destroyer of outcastes[217]. Obeisance to him of infinite power and who establishes good virtue.

13. Obeisance to you of the form of Kapila of great soul and who expounded the doctrines of Sāṁkhya and Yoga to Devahūti; O lord, obeisance to you the preceptor of Sāṁkhya.

14. Obeisance to great yogin and saint who expounds the great wisdom. Obeisance to the creator of the form of knowledge whereby the soul is delighted.

15. Obeisance to you of the form of Vedavyāsa who classified the Vedas and who wrote the Purāṇas for the welfare of the worlds.

16. Obeisance to you who are ready to perform the task of the devotees through incarnations of Fish etc. O lord, obeisance to you of the form of Brahman, the cause of creation, sustenance and annihilation.

17. Obeisance to the destroyer of the distress of your servants; the bestower of auspicious happiness. Obeisance to you wearing yellow robes, having Garuḍa for your vehicle[218]. Obeisance to the performer of all rites. Obeisance to the sole doer. Obeisance to the one worthy of being resorted to.

18. O thunderbolt for the destruction of misery etc. of the gods harassed by the Asuras. Obeisance to you lying on the Serpent-bed[219]. Obeisance to the one who has sun and the moon for his eyes.

19. O lord of Lakṣmī, O ocean of mercy, save us who have sought refuge in you. All the gods have been driven out of heaven by Jalandhara.

217. The reference to the Mlecchas indicates that the author of the Purāṇa was aware of the barbarous tribes—Huns and others who perpetrated heinous atrocities on Indian people.

218. For details see Dange : the Garuḍa-legend in "the Legends in the MB.".

219. Viṣṇu is represented as reclining on Serpent Śeṣa. A vivid picture of Śeṣaśāyī Viṣṇu is depicted on the outer wall of the Daśāvatāra temple at Deogarh. For this illustration see Agrawal, Matsya Purāṇa—A Study P. 200.

20. The sun has been dislodged from his post. Similarly the moon and the fire too have been removed. The Serpent-king has been removed from Pātāla and Dharmarāja has been dispossessed.

21. While men freely move about, the gods do not shine. We have sought refuge in you. Let measures for his annihilation be thought of.

Sanatkumāra said:—

22. On hearing these piteous entreaties of the gods, Viṣṇu the slayer of Madhu, the ocean of mercy, spoke in a thundering voice.

Viṣṇu said:—

23. "O gods, cast off your fear. I shall come to the battle-ground. I shall show my valour to Jalandhara."

24. Having said this with distressed mind, Viṣṇu the enemy of the Asuras got up quickly. The god Viṣṇu who is favourably disposed to his devotees immediately mounted his vehicle Garuda.

25 On seeing her lord departing along with the gods, Lakṣmī, the daughter of the ocean, spoke with palms joined in reverence and tears welling up in the eyes.

26. "O lord, I am your beloved. If I am always devoted to you, O storehouse of mercy, how does my brother's death be at your hands.

Viṣṇu said:—

27-28. Since I have been eulogised by the gods I shall go to the battle ground immediately. I can only show my valour to the Asura Jalandhara. He cannot be slain by me because he is a part of Śiva. Moreover Brahmā has said so. Further, you love him too."

Sanatkumāra said:—

29. Having said this and seating himself on Garuḍa with the conch, discus, mace and the sword held in his hands, Viṣṇu hastened to the fight along with Indra and other gods.

30. Roaring like a lion and accompanied by the gods

who blazed with Viṣṇu's splendour, he reached the place where Jalandhara was waiting.

31. Then the Daityas afflicted by the gusts of wind set in motion by the wings in the speedy flight of the younger brother of Aruṇa (i.e Garuḍa)[220] were blown here and there like the clouds in the sky tossed about in a stormy whirlwind.*

32. Then on seeing the Asuras afflicted by the gusts of wind, Jalandhara rushed against Viṣṇu shouting out cries of bravery angrily.

33. In the meantime the delighted gods equipped with a vast army began to fight with their strength increased by the brilliance of Viṣṇu.

34. Seeing the army of the gods present there ready to fight Jalandhara commanded the invincible Asuras thus.

Jalandhara said:—

35. O Excellent Asuras, put up a stiff fight with Indra and other gods who are always cowardly though they have a huge army.

36-37. At my bidding let all these come out with their entire army—the Mauryas numbering a hundred thousand, the Dhūmras in hundreds, the Asuras and the Kālakeyas in crores and the Kālakas, the Daurhṛdas and the Kaṅkas in lakhs.

38. All of you come out readily equipped with many divisions of the army and different kinds of weapons. Be fearless and free from hesitations.

39. O Śumbha, O Niśumbha, destroy in a trice the insignificant gods who feel nervous in the battle field. You are extremely valorous.

Sanatkumāra said:—

40-41. Thus the Asuras clever and efficient in battle, commanded by Jalandhara on the one hand and gods equipped with the four sorts of fighting groups on the other

220. Garuḍa, the vehicle of Viṣṇu, is called Aruṇānuja, i.e. the younger brother of Aruṇa the charioteer of the sun.

*The verse 31 and the first half of the verse 32 of this chapter are repeated in Ch. 17 after the verse No. 7.

fought one another with maces, arrows, javelins, spears etc. They hit one another with axes and spears.

42. The strong ones hit and struck with different weapons. The heroic gods supported and invigorated by Hṛṣīkeśa roared like lions and discharged sharp arrows.

43. Some fought with arrows of very sharp points; some with pestles and iron clubs and some with axes and spears.

44. Thus the fight between the gods and the Asuras was terrific. It was very fierce frightening the sages and the Siddhas.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

(*The fight between Viṣṇu and Jalandhara*)

Sanatkumāra said:—

1. Then the heroic Asuras hit and struck the gods distressed and terrified, with the spears, axes and clubs.

2. With their bodies cut and pierced by the weapons of the Asuras, the gods including Indra became distressed in mind by fear and they fled from the battle.

3. On seeing the gods fleeing, Viṣṇu hastened to the battle ground seated on his vehicle Garuḍa.

4. By means of his discus Sudarśana he diffused his splendour all round. He shone with the brilliant lotus in his hand and offered fearlessness to his devotees.

5. Holding the conch, sword, mace and the bow, the heroic deity was very furious. He was efficient in the battle using fierce weapons.

6. He produced the twanging sound from his bow and roared aloud. O sage, all the three worlds were filled with its loud sound.

7. The lord Viṣṇu who was highly infuriated cut off the heads of countless Asuras by means of the arrows discharged from his bow.

8. Then the Asuras afflicted by the gusts of wind set in motion by the wings of Garuḍa in his speedy flight

were blown to and fro like the clouds in the sky tossed about in a stormy whirlwind.

9. On seeing the Asuras afflicted by the gusts of wind Jalandhara the great Asura became furious and terrified all the gods.

10. Seeing Viṣṇu suppressing and pounding the Asuras, the lips of the heroic Asura throbbed and he rushed at Viṣṇu to fight with him.

11. The king of Asuras shouted and roared terrifying both the gods and the Asuras. On hearing it, the ears became pierced.

12. The entire universe, filled with the terrible shouts of the Asura Jalandhara, quaked.

13. Then a great battle ensued between Viṣṇu and Jalandhara, the ruler of Asuras, both filling up the sky with their arrows.

14. O sage, gods, Asuras, sages and the Siddhas were very much surprised at the terrible mutual clash between the two.

15. Striking with a single arrow, Viṣṇu smote the heart of the Asura. With innumerable arrows he cut off the umbrella, banner, bow and arrows of the demon.

16. Seizing the mace with his hand, the Asura jumped up quickly, hit Garuḍa on his head and felled him to the ground.

17. The infuriated Asura with throbbing lips hit Viṣṇu in his heart with his sharp spear diffusing its splendour.

18. Viṣṇu laughingly split the mace with his sword. The destroyer of Asuras twanged his bow and split him with sharp arrows.

19. Viṣṇu the infuriated destroyer of the Asuras smote the Asura Jalandhara with a very sharp terrifying arrow.

20. On seeing his arrow coming, the powerful Asura cut it off with another arrow and hit Viṣṇu in the chest.

21. The heroic Viṣṇu of long arms split the arrow discharged by the Asura to the size of gingelly seeds and roared.

22. The infuriated great Asura fixed an arrow again to his bow and split the arrow of Viṣṇu.

23. Vāsudeva fixed another arrow to his bow for the destruction of the enemy of the gods angrily and roared like a lion.

24. Biting his lips with anger, Jalandhara the powerful king of Asuras split the bow of Viṣṇu with his arrow.

25. The heroic Asura of fierce valour, terrible to the gods, hit Viṣṇu again with very sharp arrows.

26. With his bow split, the lord Viṣṇu, protector of the worlds, hurled his great mace for the destruction of Jalandhara.

27. That mace resembling a blazing flame when hurled by Viṣṇu moved with unerring aim and dashed against his body.

28. Though hit by it, the great haughty Jalandhara did not move even slightly as though he was hit by a flower-garland.

29. Then the infuriated Jalandhara, invincible in war, terrifying to the Asuras hurled a trident, resembling fire, at Viṣṇu.

30. Immediately Viṣṇu remembered the lotus-like feet of Śiva and cut the trident with his sword Nandaka.

31. When the trident was split, the lord of the Asuras leapt and rushed against Viṣṇu and hit him in the chest with his fist.

32. Without minding the pain in the least, the heroic Viṣṇu hit Jalandhara in the chest with his firm fist.

33. Then both of them equally powerful had a hand to hand fight hitting each other with arms, fists and knees. They filled the earth with reverberating sounds.

34. Fighting with the Asura thus, for a long time, O excellent sage, Viṣṇu was surprised. He felt dejected in the heart.

35. Then he the foremost among the magic-wielders assumed a delightful aspect. He addressed the king of Asuras in a thundering voice.

Viṣṇu said:—

36. "O excellent Asura, you are blessed. You are

invincible in war. Since you are a great lord you are not at all afraid of even great weapons.

37. Many Asuras have been killed by these very same weapons in great battles. The wicked and haughty people have been pierced through their bodies and killed.

38. O great Asura, I am delighted by this fight with you. You are really great. A hero like you has not been seen in the three worlds including the mobile and immobile beings.

39. O lord of Asuras, choose a boon. I am pleased at your valour. I shall give you anything even that which cannot be given, whatever is in your mind.

Sanatkumāra said:—

40. On hearing these words of Viṣṇu, skilled in magic, the intelligent king of the Asuras replied thus.

Jalandhara said:—

41. O Brother-in-law, if you are pleased give me this boon. You stay in my house with all your followers, my sister and myself.

Sanatkumāra said:—

42. On hearing these words of the great Asura, lord Viṣṇu, the lord of gods, said distressingly—"So be it."

43. Then Viṣṇu came to the city called Jalandhara[221] along with his followers, the gods and lakṣmī.

44. Then the Asura Jalandhara returned to his abode and stayed very delightedly in the company of his sister and Viṣṇu.

45. Thereafter Jalandhara appointed Asuras in the authoritative posts of the gods. Joyously he returned to the Earth.

46. The son of the ocean confiscated whatever gem or jewel the gods, Gandharvas or Siddhas had hoarded.

47. After appointing the powerful Asura, Niśumbha,

221. The town of the Daitya Jalandhara can be identified with that of the same name in the East Punjab. It was the capital of Jālandhara Deśa in the Uttarāpatha. For details see the Kumārikākhaṇḍa of Skandapurāṇa.

in the nether-worlds, the powerful ruler of the Asuras brought Śeṣa and others to the Earth.

48. Making gods, Gandharvas, Siddhas, Serpents, Rākṣasas and human beings, the denizens of his capital, he ruled over the three worlds.

49. After making the gods thus subservient to himself, Jalandhara protected them all virtuously, like his own sons.

50. When he was ruling the kingdom virtuously, none in his realm was sick or miserable or lean and emaciated or indigent.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

(*The conversation between Nārada and Jalandhara*)

Sanatkumāra said:—

1. When the great Asura was ruling over the Earth virtuously, the gods were reduced to be mere slaves, O great sage.

2. The distressed gods mentally sought refuge in Śiva the benefactor, lord of gods and of everyone.

3. They eulogised the great lord, the bestower of everything and favourably disposed to his devotees, by means of pleasant words.

4. The great lord, the bestower of all desires to his devotees called Nārada and commissioned him with a desire to carry out the task of the gods.

5. Then the celestial sage, the wise devotee of Śiva, the goal of the good, went to the gods in the city of the Asuras at the bidding of Śiva.

6. On seeing the sage Nārada coming, the distressed gods, Indra and others, stood up.

7. After bowing to the sage, Indra and other gods, their anxiety apparently manifest in their faces, offered a seat to Nārada.

8. After bowing to Nārada the great sage who sat comfortably, the distressed gods, Indra and others spoke to him again:

The gods said:—

9. O excellent sage, listen to our misery. O merciful one, after listening to it, destroy it quickly. You are powerful and the favourite of Śiva.

10. The gods have been routed by the Asura Jalandhara from their abodes and positions of controlling authority. Hence we are miserable and distressed.

11. The hot-rayed sun and the moon have been ousted from their positions. The fire-god and the god of death and guardians of the quarters have been expelled.

12. The gods have been harassed by that powerful Asura. We who have been subjected to great grief now seek refuge in you.

13. The great Asura Jalandhara who has suppressed the gods and who is very powerful has made Viṣṇu subservient to him in the battle.

14. Becoming subservient because of helplessness occasioned by the boon granted to him, Viṣṇu who carried out our tasks has now begun to stay in his palace along with Lakṣmī.

15. O intelligent one, please exert yourself for the destruction of Jalandhara. You have fortunately come to us and you have always been the person who can achieve everything for us.

Sanatkumāra said:—

16. On hearing these words of the gods, the great sage Nārada, the merciful, consoled them and said.

Nārada said:—

17. O gods, I know that you have been defeated by the king of Asuras, that you are miserable and harassed and have been deposed.

18. There is no doubt in this that I shall carry out your task according to my ability. O gods, since you are in misery I shall be favourable to you."

Sanatkumāra said:—

19. After saying so and consoling the gods, the excel-

lent sage went to the assembly chamber of Jalandhara to see the favourite Asura.

20. On seeing the excellent sage, the king Jalandhara stood up and offered him a splendid seat with great devotion.

21. After worshipping him duly the surprised king of the Asuras laughed loudly and spoke to the excellent sage.

Jalandhara said:—

22. O brahmin, whence do you come from? What did you see here? O sage, what is the aim of your present visit here?

Sanatkumāra said:—

23. On hearing these words of king Jalandhara the delighted great sage Nārada replied to him.

Nārada said:—

24. O Jalandhara of great intellect, O lord of Dānavas and Daityas, O lord of all the worlds, you are blessed. You alone are the enjoyer of all jewels.

25. O excellent king of Daityas, listen to the purpose for which I have come here. I shall explain it to you.

26. O lord of Daityas, I had been to the summit of Kailāsa casually. It is ten thousand Yojanas wide. It has a grove of Kalpa trees.

27. Hundreds of Kāmadhenus are found there. It is illuminated by Cintāmaṇi gems. It abounds in gold. It is divine and wonderfully brilliant.

28. There I saw Śiva seated along with Pārvatī. He is fair-complexioned and exquisitely handsome. He has three eyes and the moon for his crest.

29. On seeing this wonderfully great thing, a doubt arose in my mind. Can there be anywhere in the three worlds such a splendour as this?"

30. O lord of Daityas then the idea of your prosperity struck into my mind. Now I have come to you to see it personally.

Sanatkumāra said:—

31. On hearing these words of Nārada the lord of

Daityas Jalandhara showed all his glory to Nārada.

32. On seeing it, the wise Nārada, eager to realise the interests of the gods, spoke to the king of Daityas, Jalandhara, induced by the lord.

Nārada said:—

33. O foremost among heroes, you have everything conducive to prosperity. You are the lord of the three worlds. What wonder that you possess this wealth.

34. Big jewels, heaps of gems, elephants and other adjuncts to prosperity flourish in your mansion. Whatever valuable thing there is in the worlds finds a place here.

35. O great hero, the most excellent of all elephants, Airāvata of Indra has been brought by you. The most excellent of all horses, Uccaiḥśravas[222] of the sun has been brought by you.

36. The celestial Kalpa tree has been brought by you; the treasures of Kubera and the aerial chariot of Brahmā yoked to swan have been brought by you.

37. Thus all excellent things available in heaven, earth and nether worlds, O great Daitya, flourish in your mansion in their entirety.

38. O great hero, I am highly delighted on seeing your great affluence consisting of diverse objects—elephant horse etc.

39. But O Jalandhara, your mansion is deficient in the most excellent of all ladies. You deserve to bring that.

40. O Jalandhara, one who possesses all excellent things but does not possess the most excellent of women does not shine. His life is rendered waste.

Sanatkumāra said:—

41. On hearing these words of Nārada the noble soul, the king of Daityas, with his mind excited by passion, spoke as follows—

222. Uccaiḥśravas, the horse of the sun, is distinct from that of the same name which was appropriated by Indra after it was produced at the churning of the ocean (Cp. V. 11 of the next chapter).

Jalandhara said:—

42. "O celestial sage, O Nārada, obeisance be to you, O holy lord. Where is this most excellent of all ladies ? Please tell me now.

43. Wherever it may be in the whole of this universe, if such a lady exists anywhere, I will bring her here. Truth, it is certainly the truth."

Nārada said:—

44. Kailāsa is very beautiful and it possesses all sorts of things conducive to prosperity. Śiva lives there assuming the form of a naked Yogin.

45. His wife Pārvatī is exquisitely beautiful in every limb. She is charming and has all the characteristics of a beautiful lady.

46. Such an exquisite beauteous form has never been seen anywhere. It incites the enthusiasm of everybody. It is highly wonderful. It fascinates even the Yogins. It is worthy of being seen. It is conducive to great prosperity.

47. This occurs to my mind, O valiant Jalandhara that there is none more prosperous in the three worlds than Śiva who possesses the most excellent of all ladies.

48. Even the four-faced[223] lord Brahmā, immersed in her ocean of beauty, lost his mental steadiness formerly.[224] Who can be compared to such a beautiful lady?

49. Even Śiva reputed to be free from infatuation has been won over by her womanly sports. Śiva who is independent has been subjugated by her.

50. The prosperity that he enjoys inasmuch as he indulges in dalliance with the most excellent of all ladies has not come to you O lord of Daityas though you are the master of excellent gems and jewels.

Sanatkumāra said:—

51. After saying this, the world-renowned celestial

223. Brahmā is called four-faced (caturanana or caturmukha). Originally he had five heads but one was cut off by Śiva for telling lies. According to another version it was burnt off by the fire of Śiva's central eye for speaking disrespectfully.

224. Cp. ŚP. RS. Pārvatīkhaṇḍa 49. 8.

sage, Nārada, pursuing his attempt to help the gods departed from there by the aerial path.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

(*Jalandhara's emissary to Śiva*)

Vyāsa said:—

1. O omniscient Sanatkumāra, what did the king of Daityas do after the departure of Nārada to heaven? Please narrate to me in detail.

Sanatkumāra said:—

2. When Nārada departed to heaven after taking leave of the Daitya, the king of Daityas who had heard of the exquisite beauty of Pārvatī became harassed with pangs of love.

3. The deluded Daitya, Jalandhara, who had lost clear thinking, being swayed by Time (the annihilator) called his messenger Rāhu.

4. The infatuated son of the ocean, Jalandhara, addressed him politely with these words.

Jalandhara said:—

5. O Rāhu of great intellect, most excellent of my emissaries, go to the mountain Kailāsa, O accomplisher of all activities.

6. A sage and a Yogin named Śiva lives there. He has matted locks of hair. He is detached. He has controlled his senses. His body is smeared with ashes.

7. O messenger, you shall go there and tell the detached Yogin Śiva with matted locks of hair, fearlessly.

8. 'O Yogin, ocean of mercy, of what avail is an exquisitely beautiful wife to you who stay in the jungle attended by ghosts, goblins, spirits and other beings?

9. O Yogin, this state of affairs is no good in a world with me as the Ruler? Hence you give up your wife, the most excellent lady, to me, the enjoyer of all excellent things.

10. Know that the whole universe including the mobile and immobile beings is under my suzerainty. All the excellent things of the three worlds have come into my possession.

11. I have forcibly seized the most excellent elephant of Indra, the most excellent horse, Uccaiḥśravas and the celestial tree pārijāta.

12. The wonderfully excellent and the most divine aerial chariot fitted with the swan, belonging to Brahmā is now standing in my court-yard.

13. The divine and excellent treasure Mahāpadma etc. of Kubera is in my custody. The umbrella of Varuṇa stands in my house shedding its golden brilliance.

14. The great garland of never-fading lotuses of fine filaments belonging to my father is as good as mine. The noose of Varuṇa lord of waters is also mine.

15. The excellent Javelin of Mṛtyu has been seized by me with force. The god of fire has surrendered to me two clothes purified in fire.

16. Thus, O great Yogin, all excellent things shine in my possession. Hence O ascetic (wearing matted hair) you too surrender your wife the most excellent of all ladies to me.[225]

Sanatkumāra said :—

17. On hearing his words Rāhu went to Kailāsa and was allowed to enter by Nandin. With surprise and mystery manifest in his eyes, he went to the assembly chamber of Śiva.

18-20. On entering it, he saw Śiva, the lord of the gods, the great lord, quelling darkness with his refulgence, shining with ashes smeared (over his body), adorned with all Royal paraphernalia, of wonderful features, exquisite in every limb and embellished with divine ornaments. The emissary named Rāhu bowed to Śiva. His haughtiness subsided by the brilliance of his body. He went near Śiva.

21. Rāhu was desirous of speaking to him. He sat in front of Śiva. Urged by his gesture Rāhu spoke to the three-eyed god Śiva.

225. For the similarity of ideas and verbal expression compare verses 10-16 and 22-29 of this chapter with the verses of the Mkp.

Rāhu said:—

22. I am the messenger of the lord of the three worlds, worthy of being served for ever by Daityas and serpents. I have come here to you on being sent by him.

23. The son of the ocean Jalandhara became the lord of all Daityas and now he is the lord of the three worlds. He is the emperor of all.

24. That powerful king of Daityas is like the god of death to the gods. Listen to what he says addressing you the Yogin.

25. O bull-bannered god, listen to the behest of the lord of Daityas who has divine power and who is the master of all excellent things.

26. How can the auspicious daughter of Himavat be a wife unto you who habitually stay in the cremation ground wearing garlands of bones and assuming the form of a naked ascetic.

27. I am the possessor of all excellent things. She is the most excellent of all ladies. She deserves me better than you who live on alms.

28. The three worlds are under my control. I partake of shares in sacrifices. The excellent things of the three worlds are found in my palace.

29. We are the enjoyers of excellent things. You are a mere naked ascetic and a Yogin. Surrender your wife unto me. Subjects shall always keep their king happy.

Sanatkumāra said:—

30. When Rāhu spoke thus, a terrific being resonant like the thunder came out from the space between the eyebrows of the trident-bearing deity.

31. He had a leonine mouth with a moving tongue; his eyes shed fiery flames ; his hair stood at its end; his body was dry and rough. He appeared to be the man-lion incarnation of Viṣṇu.

32. He was huge in size. He had long arms. His calves were as stout and huge as the palmyra tree. He was very terrible. He immediately rushed at Rāhu.

33. On seeing him rushing to devour, Rāhu was terrified. He ran out when he was caught by the terrible being.

Rāhu said:—

34. "O great lord, O lord of the gods, save me who have sought refuge in you. You are always worthy of being worshipped by the gods and Asuras. You are the lord endowed with all riches and accomplishments.

35. O great lord, your terrible servant has come here to swallow me, a brahmin.

36. O lord of gods, favourably disposed to your devotees, save me lest he should devour me. Obeisance be to you again and again."

Sanatkumāra said:—

37. O sage, on hearing the words of the brahmin, the great lord, favourite of the distressed and helpless, spoke to his Gaṇa.

The great lord said:—

38. "Leave off this brahmin Rāhu, the emissary who has sought refuge. O excellent Gaṇa, those who seek shelter shall be protected, not punished."

Sanatkumāra said:—

39. Commanded thus by the lord of Pārvatī, of sympathetic temperament, the Gaṇa set Rāhu free, immediately on hearing the word brahmin.

40. After leaving off Rāhu, the gaṇa came near Śiva and pleaded to the great lord in piteous words.

The gaṇa said:—

41. O great lord, O lord of the gods, O Śiva the merciful, O deity favourable to the devotees, my prey has been taken away.

42. O lord, I am tormented by hunger. So I am utterly emaciated. O lord of the gods, what shall be eaten by me? Please command me, O lord.

Sanatkumāra said:—

43. On hearing these words of the being, the great lord of wonderful sports, eager to help his own persons, replied.

The great lord said:—

44. "If you are badly in need of food, if hunger torments you, eat up immediately the flesh of your own hands and feet."

Sanatkumāra said:—

45. On being commanded thus by Śiva, the being ate up the flesh from his limbs. He was then left only with his head.

46. On seeing that being of terrible activities, left only with his head, the delighted Sadāśiva spoke smilingly.

Śiva said:—

47. "O great Gaṇa, you are blessed since you carried out my behest to the very letter. O excellent one, I am pleased with this action of yours.

48. You shall hereafter be known by the title Kīrtimukha. You shall be my door-keeper. You shall be one of my great Gaṇas, very heroic and terrible to all wicked persons.

49. You are my favourite. In the course of my worship, you too shall be worshipped always by my devotees. Those who do not worship you cannot be pleasing to me."

Sanatkumāra said:—

50. With this excellent blessing from Śiva, he became delighted. From that time onwards Kīrtimukha[226] was stationed at the entrance of the lord of the gods.

51. This Gaṇa shall be specially worshipped in the course of the adoration of Śiva. Those who do not worship him at the outset will find their worship in vain.

226. Kīrtimukha, the great Gaṇa of Śiva, represented in sculpture by a trunkless head, is installed beside the door in front of Śiva's image.

CHAPTER TWENTY

(The fight between the rank and file of the Gaṇaṣ and the Asuras)

Vyāsa said:—

1. O omniscient Sanatkumāra, a wonderful story has been narrated by you, wherein the sanctifying sports of Śiva the great lord are included.

2. Now take pity on me and tell me with pleasure. O great sage, when released by that being where did Rāhu go ?

Sūta said:—

3. On hearing the words of Vyāsa of immeasurable intelligence, the great sage, the delighted son of Brahmā, replied.

Sanatkumāra said:—

4. Rāhu had been let off in the land of the outcastes.[227] He too became an outcaste and came to be known in the world as such.

5. Considering that as his second birth he became humble. He became free from haughtiness. He slowly wended his way to the city of Jalandhara.

6. After approaching Jalandhara the lord of Daityas, he explained everything concerning Śiva in detail, O Vyāsa.

7. On hearing it, the powerful son of the ocean, the excellent lord of Daityas, Jalandhara became furious from head to foot.

8. Then the infuriated excellent Daitya commanded the entire army of the Daityas to enter into the fray.

Jalandhara said:—

9-10. Let all the Asuras such as Kālanemi and others set out with their entire divisions; Śumbha, Niśumbha and

227. The country of Varbaras or Barbaras is identified with the Ābir (Ābhīra) Deśa in the south-west in the Indus delta. Barbaras were the wild people associated with Yavanas and Khasas. There is a reference to the town Barbari or Barbarikā in Skanda Purāṇa (1 11 37.1) and Barbaricum or Barbaricon by Periplus and Ptolemy. For details see Awasthi: Studies in Skanda Purāṇa PP 100-101

other heroes; the descendants of Koṭivīra, the scions of the family of Kambu. Daurhṛdas, Kālakas, Kālakeyas, Mauryas and Dhaumras—let all these start for the fight.

11. After ordering thus, the lord of the Asuras the valorous son of the ocean set out quickly accompanied by crores of Daityas.

12. Then Śukra and Rāhu with his head severed went ahead of him. In his quick jerky movement, his crown became dislodged and fell on the ground.

13. The sky was entirely enveloped by clouds as in the rainy season. Many ill omens occurred portending great slumber.

14. On seeing his enterprise, the gods including Indra went to Kailāsa, the abode of Śiva without being observed.

15. After going there and seeing Śiva, the gods including Indra, bowed to him with stooping shoulders. They joined their palms in reverence and eulogised.

The gods said:—

16. O great lord, lord of the gods, O Śiva the merciful, obeisance be to you. Save us who have sought refuge in you.

17. O lord, we are very much distressed by this harassment. All including Indra are deposed and compelled to stay on the earth.

18. O lord, how is it possible that you do not know this adversity of the gods? Hence in order to protect us please kill him.

19. O lord, Viṣṇu who was assigned by you the task of protection is now unable to protect us.

20. He is also subservient to him and stays in his mansion along with Lakṣmī. All of us gods stay there obeying his behests.

21. O Śiva, we have approached you unobserved by him. That powerful son of the ocean is coming hither to fight with you.

22. O omniscient lord, you shall kill Jalandhara in the battle without delay. Save us who have sought refuge in you.

Sanatkumāra said:—

23. After saying this, the gods including Indra bowed to him and stood humbly glancing at the feet of lord Śiva.

24. On hearing the words of the gods the bull-bannered deity laughed. He called Viṣṇu immediately and spoke these words.

The lord Śiva said:—

25. O great Viṣṇu, the distressed gods harassed by Jalandhara have sought refuge in me.

26. O Viṣṇu, how is it that Jalandhara was not killed in battle by you? Leaving off your own Vaikuṇṭha you have gone to his mansion?

27. As I wanted to be free and sportful, I had appointed you for the protection of the good and the curbing of the wicked.

Sanatkumāra said:—

28. On hearing the words of lord Śiva, Viṣṇu replied humbly bowing down with palms joined in reverence.

Viṣṇu said:—

29. He was not killed in war by me because he was born of a part of yours. Moreover he is Lakṣmī's brother. Please kill him.

30. O lord of the gods, he is very powerful, heroic and indefatigable by all the heaven-dwellers and others too. I am telling you the truth.

31. In fact a war was fought with him by me in the company of the gods. But my strategy was ineffective in regard to this great Dānava.

32. I told him "I am delighted with your valour. Tell me the boon you wish to have". On hearing these words of mine he chose an excellent boon.

33. "O great Viṣṇu please stay in my mansion subservient to me along with my sister,[228] the gods and myself." So I went to his mansion.

228. Lakṣmī, produced at the churning of the ocean, became the daughter of the ocean. Thus she could be the sister of Jalandhara who was the son of the ocean.

Sanatkumāra said:—

34. On hearing the words of Viṣṇu, lord Śiva who is favourably disposed to his devotees laughed and said delightedly and sympathetically.

The great lord Śiva said:—

35. O Viṣṇu, foremost among the gods, please listen to my words attentively. I will kill the great Daitya Jalandhara. There is no doubt about this.

36. Go back to your abode fearlessly. Let the gods too go back without fear and hesitation, considering the ruler of the Asuras already killed.

Sanatkumāra said:—

37. On hearing the words of lord Śiva, the lord of Lakṣmī immediately went to his abode without doubts along with the gods.

38. In the meantime, O Vyāsa, that valorous king of the Daityas went along with the well-equipped Asuras to the outskirts of the mountain.

39. Accompanied by a vast army he laid siege to Kailāsa. He stood there like the god of death roaring like a lion.

40. On hearing the tumultuous roar of the Daityas, lord Śiva of great sports, the destroyer of the wicked, became very furious.

41. The great lord of various sports, the enthusiastic Śiva commanded his powerful Gaṇas, Nandin and others, severally.

42. Nandin, Vighneśvara, Kumāra and all other Gaṇas, at the bidding of Śiva hurriedly got ready for the battle.

43. The infuriated and invincible Gaṇas descended from Kailāsa heroically shouting war cries and leaping to fight.

44. Then at the ridges, valleys and sides of Kailāsa, a terrible battle was fought between the leaders of the Pramathas and the Daityas. Weapons clashed with weapons.

45. The whole earth shook resonant with the sounds of great war drums, Mṛdaṅgas and conches that inspired the heroes as well as the sounds of elephants, horses and chariots.

46. The whole atmosphere was filled with javeline, iron

clubs, arrows, great pestles, iron rods, pikes etc. as if strewn with pearls.

47. With the dead elephants, horses and foot soldiers, the earth shone in the same way as before when great mountains were scattered, smitten by the thunderbolt of Indra.

48. With the groups of Daityas killed by the Pramathas, and with the Gaṇas killed by the Daityas, the whole ground was filled with suets, flesh and streams of blood. It became so marshy as it became impassable.

49. With the power of Sañjīvanī, Bhārgava resuscitated the forces of the Daityas killed by the Pramathas in the battle again and again.

50. On seeing them, all the Gaṇas were agitated and terrified. They intimated to the lord of the gods what Śukra did.

51. On hearing it, lord Śiva became terribly furious. He became terrific blazing the quarters as it were.

52. A terrible Kṛtyā came out of Rudra's mouth. Her calves were as stout as Palmyra trees. Her mouth was huge and deep like mountain caverns. With her breasts she crushed huge trees.

53. O excellent sage, she rushed immediately to the battle ground. The terrible Kṛtyā roamed the battle-ground devouring the great Asuras.

54. Fearlessly she rushed amid the battle-field where Bhārgava was stationed surrounded by the leading Daityas.

55. O sage, she enveloped the whole sky with her terrible brilliance. She split the ground she trod; she stuffed Bhārgava into her vaginal passage and vanished in the sky.

56. On seeing Bhārgava seized, the invincible armies of the Daityas became dejected and faded in their faces. They fled from the battle ground.

57. The army of the Daityas became scattered and split in their terrific fear of the Gaṇas like bundles of grass split and scattered when blown by the wind.

58. On seeing the army of the Daityas thus dispersed and frightened of the Gaṇas, the leaders Śumbha and Niśumbha and Kālanemi became infuriated.

59. All the three powerful Daityas obstructed the

army of the Gaṇas showering arrows like the destructive clouds in the rainy season.

60. The volleys of arrows discharged by the Daityas enveloped all the quarters and the atmosphere like huge swarms of locusts. They shook the hosts of Gaṇas.

61. Split by hundreds of arrows, the Gaṇas shed streams of blood. They resembled the red Kiṁśuka flowers of the spring season. They did not know what to do.

62. On seeing their army thus shattered, the infuriated leaders Nandin, Gaṇeśa and Kārttikeya hurriedly checked the rushing Daityas.

CHAPTER TWENTYONE

(*Description of the Special War*)

Sanatkumāra said:—

1. On seeing the leaders of the Gaṇas, Nandin, Gaṇeśa and Kārttikeya, the Dānavas rushed at them for a duel combat.

2. Kālanemi clashed with Nandin; Śumbha fought Gaṇeśa and Niśumbha hesitatingly rushed at Kārttikeya.

3. With five arrows Niśumbha hit the peacock of Kārttikeya in the chest and it fell unconscious.

4. Then the infuriated Kārttikeya discharged five arrows at his chariot and pierced the horses and the charioteer.

5. The invincible hero hit Niśumbha with another sharp arrow quickly and roared.

6. The Asura Niśumbha of great prowess and heroism hit Kārttikeya in the battle with his arrow as he roared.

7. By the time the furious Kārttikeya seized his spear, Niśumbha struck him with it.

8. Thus, O Vyāsa, a great fight between Kārttikeya and Niśumbha ensued as they shouted heroically.

9. Then Nandin hit Kālanemi with seven arrows and pierced his horses, banner, chariot and charioteer.

10. With very sharp shafts discharged from his bow, the infuriated Kālanemi cut the bow of Nandin.

11. Defying the great demon Kālanemi the heroic Nandīśvara hit him in the chest with his spear.

12. With his horses and charioteer killed and himself wounded in the chest, he broke the top of a mountain and hit Nandin.

13. Then Śumbha and Gaṇeśa seated respectively in a chariot and on a mouse fought each other with volleys of arrows.

14. Gaṇeśa hit Śumbha in his chest with an arrow and felled his charioteer with three arrows on the ground.

15. Then the infuriated Śumbha covered Gaṇeśa with a shower of arrows. Hitting the mouse with three arrows he roared like thunder.

16. The mouse pierced by the arrows, shook with acute pain. Gaṇeśa was thrown off (his vehicle) and he became a foot soldier (as it were).

17. Then Gaṇeśa hit Śumbha in his chest with his axe and felled him to the ground. Thereafter he mounted his mouse again.

18. Lord Gaṇeśa of elephantine face got ready for the fight. He hit him mockingly and angrily as if hitting a great elephant with a goad.

19. Kālanemi and Śumbha simultaneously attacked Gaṇeśa furiously with arrows as ruthless as serpents.

20. On seeing him afflicted, the powerful Vīrabhadra accompanied by a crore goblins rushed in.

21. The Kūṣmāṇḍas, Bhairavas, Vetālas, Yoginīs, Piśācas, Ḍākinīs and Gaṇas came there with him.

22. The Earth, resonant with various kinds of noise, shouts of joy, leonine roars and the sounds of Ḍamarukas, quaked.

23. Then the Bhūtas ran here and there devouring the Dānavas. They jumped up and danced in the battle field and threw the Asura on the ground.

24. In the meantime, O Vyāsa, Nandin and Guha regained their consciousness and got up. They roared in the battlefield again.

25. Nandin and Kārttikeya came hurriedly and struck

the Daityas in the battle ground with incessant volleys of arrows.

26. Then the army of the Daityas became agitated and dejected with many Daityas wounded, split, killed, felled to the ground and devoured.

27. Thus Nandin, Kārttikeya the formidable and valorous, Vīrabhadra and the other Gaṇas roared much in the battle.

28. Then those two generals of the son of the ocean, Niśumbha and Śumbha, the great Daitya Kālanemi and the other Asuras were defeated.

29. On seeing the army destroyed, the powerful son of the ocean rushed at the Gaṇas in his chariot of waving and wafting colours.

30. Thereat even the defeated Daityas became jubilant. O Vyāsa, they roared much and got ready for the fray.

31. The victorious Gaṇas of Śiva too roared, led by Nandin, Kārttikeya, Gaṇeśa and Vīrabhadara, O sage.

32. The trumpets of the elephants, the neighing of the horses, the rumbling of the chariots, the sounds of the conches and war-drums and the leonine roars of the armies rose up.

33. The space between heaven and the earth became enveloped by the many arrows discharged by Jalandhara as if by floating masses of mist.

34. Hitting Nandin and Gaṇeśa with five arrows each and Vīrabhadra with twenty he roared like thunder.

35. Kārttikeya the heroic son of Śiva then swiftly hit the Daitya Jalandhara with his spear and roared.

36. With the body pierced through by the spear, the Daitya fell on the ground with eyes rolling. But the powerful Asura swiftly stood up.

37. Then Jalandhara the infuriated leader of the Daityas hit Kārttikeya in his chest with his mace.

38. O Vyāsa, plainly exhibiting the successful efficiency of the Mace secured as a favour from Brahmā Kārttikeya fell on the ground suddenly.

39. Similarly, struck by the mace Nandin too fell on

the ground, He was distressed a little although he was a great hero and a destroyer of enemies.

40. Then the infuriated hero Gaṇeśa came there after remembering the lotus like feet of Śiva and split the mace of the Daitya with his axe.

41. Vīrabhadra then hit the Dānava in his chest with three arrows. He cut off the banner, umbrella, bow and the horses of the Daitya with seven arrows.

42. Then the infuriated leader of the Daityas lifted up his terrible Śakti and felled Gaṇeśa. He mounted another chariot then.

43. The powerful leader of the Daityas did not mind Vīrabhadra at all. Angrily he rushed at him.

44. Jalandhara, the heroic king of Daityas, hit Vīrabhadra with a fierce arrow and roared.

45. The infuriated Vīrabhadra split that arrow with a sharp-edged arrow. With another great arrow he hit him too.

46. Then both of them, the most excellent of heroes refulgent like the sun, fought each other with different kinds of weapons and missiles.

47. Vīrabhadra then felled his horses with his arrows. He forcefully cut off him bow and flags too.

48. Then the king of the Daityas leapt up to him with a great iron club. That powerful warrior reached very near Vīrabhadra .very quickly.

49. The heroic and powerful son of the ocean hit Vīrabhadra on his head with his great iron club. He then roared.

50. Vīrabhadra, the leader of the Gaṇas, fell on the ground with his head shattered by the iron club and shed much blood.

51. On seeing Vīrabhadra fallen, the terrified Gaṇas abandoned the battle ground shrieking and fled to lord Śiva.

52. On hearing the tumultuous uproar of the Gaṇas, the moon-crested lord asked the excellent Gaṇas, the heroes standing near him.

Śiva said:—

53. How is this tumultuous uproar among my Gaṇas?

O heroes, let this be enquired into. Peace shall be established by me, of course.

54. Even as the lord of the gods was conducting the enquiry, the leaders of the Gaṇaṣ approached the lord.

55. On seeing them dejected, the lord enquired after their health. The Gaṇas then intimated to him everything in detail.

56. On hearing it, lord Śiva, the expert in divine sports assured them of freedom from fear increasing their enthusiasm.

CHAPTER TWENTYTWO

(*Description of Jalandhara's Battle*)

Sanatkumāra said :—

1. Then the great lord Śiva assuming a terrible form went laughingly to the battle-field and sat on his bull, accompanied by his heroic Gaṇas.

2. On seeing Śiva coming, the Gaṇas who were formerly defeated returned to fight roaring like lions.

3. Other Gaṇas too shouted heroically and jubilantly. Well-equipped with their weapons they killed the Daityas with showers of arrows.

4. On seeing Śiva the terrible, all the Daityas fled for fear from the battle field as the sins on seeing a devotee of Śiva.

5. On seeing the Daityas returning from the battle field, Jalandhara rushed at Śiva discharging thousands of arrows.

6. Thousands of leading Daityas, Niśumbha, Śumbha and others rushed at Śiva, biting their lips.

7. Similarly Kālanemi the hero, Khaḍgaromā, Balāhaka, Ghasmara, Pracaṇḍa and others rushed at Śiva.

8. O sage, the heroes Śumbha and others, covered the Gaṇas of Rudra with arrows and cut their limbs.

9. On seeing his army of Gaṇas enveloped in darkness

by the volleys of arrows, Śiva split the net of their arrows and encompassed the sky with his own.

10. He afflicted the Daityas with the gusts of wind raised by the arrows. He felled them to the ground with fierce volleys of arrows.

11. He severed the head of Khaḍgaromā from his body with his axe. He shattered the head of Balāhaka with his club into two pieces.

12. He tied the Daitya Ghasmara with his noose and dashed him on the ground. With his trident, he chopped off the great hero Pracaṇḍa.

13. Some of the Asuras were killed by the bull. Some were struck by the arrows. Like elephants harassed by lions, the Asuras were unable to stay there.

14. Then the great Asura Jalandhara became infuriated and rebuked the Daityas in the battle. The courageous Daitya mocked at Śumbha and others and spoke thus.

Jalandhara said:—

15. Of what avail is your boasting about the pedigree of your mother if you flee back on being attacked ? To die cowardly while you profess to be heroes is not commendable, nor does it yield heaven.

16. O trivial fellows, if you have faith in war or the essential strength in the heart or if you have no lurking pleasures for sexual indulgence then you come forward and stand before me.

17. Death in battle is preferrable. It yields all cherished desires. It is especially conducive to fame. It has been proclaimed as the bestower of salvation too.

18. The wandering recluse of supreme knowledge and wisdom as well as he who dies fighting face to face, attain the greatest region after breaking through the solar sphere.

19. No sensible man should ever be afraid of death. Death is inevitable notwithstanding all the remedies employed to ward it off.

20. O heroes, death is congenital to any being born. Either today or at the end of a hundred years all living beings are sure to die.

21. Hence, cast off all fear for death. Come and fight in war joyously. In every respect there is certainly a great bliss here and hereafter.

Sanatkumāra said: —

22. Saying this, he tried to encourage his heroes in several ways. But the frightened demons did not regain courage. They fled from the battle in a trice.

23. On seeing his army on the rout, the heroic son of the ocean Jalandhara became very furious.

24. Then the infuriated Jalandhara challenged for a battle in a stentorian voice like the sound of fierce thunderbolt.

Jalandhara said :—

25. O ascetic, fight with me now. What is the use of slaying these ? Show me what little strength you have.

Sanatkumāra said:—

26. After saying this, Jalandhara the great Daitya hit the bull-bannered Śiva of indefatigable endeavour, with an incessant volley of arrows.

27. Laughingly, lord Śiva split all the arrows of Jalandhara by discharging his own sharp arrows even before his arrows reached him.

28. Then with seven arrows he split the horses, banner, umbrella and the bow of Daitya Jalandhara. O sage, it is not surprising in the case of Śiva.

29. The infuriated Asura the son of the ocean, devoid of a chariot and with bow split up rushed at Śiva lifting his mace vigorously.

30. O Vyāsa, lord Śiva of great sports immediately split asunder the mace hurled by him, by means of his arrows.

31. Yet the highly infuriated great Asura rushed at Śiva with the mailed fist lifted up, with a desire to kill him.

32. By a volley of arrows Jalandhara was hurled back a Krośa by Śiva of indefatigable enterprise.

33. Then, considering Śiva more powerful, Jalandhara

the Daitya, created the illusion of Gandharvas that mysteriously fascinated even Śiva.

34. By the power of his Māyā, hosts of Gandharvas and celestial damsels came into view for fascinating Śiva.

35. The Gandharvas and celestial damsels sang and danced. Others played on flutes, mṛdangas and cymbals.

36. On seeing that wonderful feat, Śiva was fascinated by the Gaṇas. He was not conscious of even the garments let down from the hands.

37. On seeing Śiva concentrated in the dance Jalandhara urged by lust immediately went to the place where Gaurī stood.

38-39. He entrusted the powerful Śumbha and Niśumbha with the conduct of war. With his demonaic Māyā he assumed the form of Śiva—with ten brawny arms, five faces, three eyes, and matted hair. He was seated on the great bull. In every respect, O Vyāsa, Jalandhara appeared like Śiva.

40. On seeing Śiva coming, the beloved of Śiva came out from the midst of her female friends within the range of his vision.

41. When the lord of Asuras saw the bauntiful Pārvatī, he let drops of semen fall and his limbs became benumbed.

42. On realising that he was the demon, the terrified Gaurī vanished immediately to the northern shore of the Mānasa lake.

43. Unable to see her who disappeared in a moment like lightning, the Daitya immediately went to the place where lord Śiva stood in order to fight him.

44. Pārvatī remembered lord Viṣṇu mentally. Immediately she saw the lord seated near her.

45. On seeing Viṣṇu bowing to her with palms joined in reverence, Pārvatī the beloved of Śiva, the mother of the universe, spoke delightedly.

Pārvatī said :—

46. O Viṣṇu, is it not known to you that the wicked Daitya Jalandhara perpetrated a wonderfully base deed ?"

47. On hearing the words of the mother of the

universe, the Garuḍa-bannered lord bowed to Pārvatī bending his neck and joining his palms in reverence and spoke.

Viṣṇu said:—

48. O mother, by your favour that incident is known to me. What you shall be pleased to commend I shall perform with your permission.

Sanatkumāra said:—

49. On hearing the words of Viṣṇu, Pārvatī said again. The mother of the universe desired to teach Viṣṇu the policy based on Dharma.

Pārvatī said :—

50. He himself has shown the path. Know that to be the way in the same manner. At my bidding, make the chastity of his wife violated.

51. O Viṣṇu, that great Daitya cannot be killed otherwise. In the earth there is no other virtue equal to chastity.

Sanatkumāra said :—

52. On hearing this command and accepting it with lowered head, Viṣṇu immediately went to the city of Jalandhara for practising deception.

CHAPTER TWENTYTHREE

(*Outraging the modesty of Vṛndā*)

Vyāsa said :—

1. O omniscient Sanatkumāra, please narrate, O eloquent one, what did Viṣṇu do there ? How did she err from her virtue ?

Sanatkumāra said :—

2. After going to the city of Jalandhara, Viṣṇu thought of violating the chastity of Vṛndā.

3. The foremost among those who wield illusion, he assumed a wonderful body and stationed himself in a park of the city. He made Vṛndā see a dream.

4. The gentle lady Vṛndā, the wife of Jalandhara, though of pure rites, had a very bad dream at night on account of Viṣṇu's power of illusion.

5. In the dream as a result of Viṣṇu's power of illusion she saw the naked form of her husband anointed with oil and seated on a buffalo.

6. He was proceeding in the southern direction. His head had been completely shaved. He was wearing black flowers to decorate himself. He was being served by a number of Asuras. He was completely encompassed by darkness.

7. Later, towards the end of the night she had various bad dreams, such as the whole city was submerged in the sea, all of a sudden, along with herself.

8. Then the lady woke up still thinking of the dream she had had. She saw the rising sun with a hole in the middle and fading repeatedly.

9. On realising that it was a bad portent, the terrified lady began to cry. She did not feel happy at all in the spacious terraces and towers of the palace.

10. With two of her friends she then went to the park in the city. Even there she did not find herself at ease.

11. Then she, the dejected gloomy wife of Jalandhara, wandered from forest to forest. She was not conscious of even herself.

12. The wandering lady saw two demons of terrible leonine faces with shining curved fanglike teeth.

13. Terrified much on seeing them, the lady fled from there and saw an ascetic of calm countenance observing silence and accompanied by his disciple.

14. Putting her tender creeperlike hands round his neck due to fright she gasped out—"O sage, save me. I have sought refuge in you."

15. Seeing the agitated lady followed by the demons the sage drove them back with a loud bellowing sound of "Hum".

16. O sage, seeing them routed and terrified by the

mere Humkāra, the wife of the king of Daityas was struck with a great wonder in her heart.

17. Freed from the fear she bowed down to the great sage with palms joined in reverence and prostrated herself in front of him. Vṛndā then spoke.

Vṛndā said:—

18. "O leader of sages, O ocean of mercy, O remover of harassment from others, I have been saved by you from this terrible danger from the wicked demons.

19. You are competent in every respect. You are omniscient. Yet I wish to submit something. Be pleased to hear it.

20. O lord, Jalandhara my husband has gone to fight Śiva. O holy one of good rites, how does he fare in the war? Please tell me."

Sanatkumāra said:—

21. On hearing her words, the sage feigned a deceptive silence. Fully aware of the means of achieving his selfish ends he looked up sympathetically.

22. In the meantime two lordly monkeys came there and stood bowing down in front of him. At a significant gesture from his eyebrows, the monkeys rose into the sky again.

23. O great sage, within a trice, they came back taking with them his head, body and limbs and stood in front of the sage.

24. On seeing the head, body and limbs of her husband, Vṛndā fell unconscious, extremely pained at the misery of her lord.

Vṛndā said:—

25. "O lord, formerly you used to humour me with pleasant chats. How is it that you do not speak to me now, to your pious beloved?

26. How is it that you, by whom all the gods including the Gandharvas and Viṣṇu had been defeated, you who had conquered the three worlds, have now been killed by a poor sage?

27. O excellent Daitya, you did not know the reality of Śiva nor did you pay heed to my words 'Śiva is Supreme Brahman.'

28. Having served you I found that it was not due to haughtiness but due to your association with bad men that you did all this."

29. Saying these and other words of lamentation, his beloved wife strictly adhering to virtue, cried in diverse ways with a pained heart.

30. Then steadying herself a little, and heaving deep sighs of grief she bowed to the excellent sage with palms joined in reverence.

31. "O excellent sage, storehouse of mercy, eager to help others, O gentle sir, take pity on me and resuscitate my lord.

32. O great sage, I know that you are competent to enliven him again. Hence please resuscitate my beloved husband."

Sanatkumāra said:—

33. After saying this, the chaste wife of the Daitya fell at his feet heaving sighs of grief.

The sage said:—

34. This Daitya cannot be enlivened because he has been killed by Śiva in the battle. Those killed in battle by Śiva never return to life.

35. Still, knowing the eternal Dharma that those who seek refuge should be protected, I shall resuscitate him urged by pity.

Sanatkumāra said:—

36. After saying this and restoring him to life, O sage, that sage who was Viṣṇu the foremost among those who wield illusion vanished from the scene.

37. Jalandhara thus revived to life by him stood up. Delighted in mind he embraced Vṛndā and kissed her face.

38. On seeing her husband, Vṛndā too was delighted. She forgot her sorrow. She considered everything a dream.

39. Delighted in the heart and with all the dormant

passions kindled up, she sported with him for many days in the middle of that forest.

40. Once at the end of the sexual intercourse she realised that it was Viṣṇu. Vṛndā rebuked him angrily and spoke thus.

Vṛndā said:—

41. Fie on this misdeed of Viṣṇu in outraging the modesty of another man's wife. I have now realised you as the wielder of illusion, appearing in the guise of an ascetic.

Sanatkumāra said:—

42. O Vyāsa, saying thus in great anger she showed her brilliant powers as a staunch chaste lady by cursing Viṣṇu.

43. "O base foe of the Daityas, defiler of other people's virtue, O wicked one, take this curse from me, greater in force than all persons.

44. The two persons whom you made to appear in front of me shall become Rākṣasas[229] and abduct your wife.

45. You will be distressed on account of separation from your wife roaming about with Śeṣa 'lord of snakes'[230] who posed as your disciple here. You will seek the help of monkeys[231] in the forest.

46. After saying this, Vṛndā entered fire though prevented by Viṣṇu who was fascinated by her charms.

47. O sage, then Brahmā and other gods, gathered in the sky accompanied by their wives in order to see the salvation of Vṛndā.

48. Then the great brilliance of the wife of Jalandhara immediately went to Śivaloka even as the gods stood watching.

49. The refulgence of Vṛndā became merged in Pārvatī. There was a great shout of "Victory" in the rows of the gods standing in the sky.

229. The two Rākṣasas referred to here were Mārīca and Rāvaṇa who abducted Sītā, wife of Rāma, the seventh incarnation of Viṣṇu.

230. The monkeys referred to here were Sugrīva, Hanūmān, Nala Nīla and others.

231. The expression 'lord of snakes' signifies Lakṣamana, said to be the incarnation of Śeṣa.

50. O sage, thus the great queen Vṛndā the excellent daughter of Kālanemi attained great salvation, thanks to the power of her chastity.

51. Viṣṇu thought of Vṛndā remorsefully. The smoke and dust from her funeral pyre covered his face. He stood there itself without any peace of mind though urged and consoled by hosts of gods and Siddhas.

CHAPTER TWENTYFOUR

(*Jalandhara is slain*)

1. O excellent son of Brahmā, O intelligent one, you have narrated a wonderful story. What happened thereafter in the battle? How was the Asura killed? Please narrate.

Sanatkumāra said:—

2. Unable to see Pārvatī, the king of Daityas returned to the battle ground. The groups of deceptive Gandharvas vanished. It was only then that the bull-bannered deity regained awareness of the surroundings.

3. On seeing the illusion vanished, Śiva woke up. Following the way of the world, the annihilator became very furious.

4. Then Śiva was a bit surprised in the mind. He approached Jalandhara angrily in order to fight with him. On seeing Śiva approaching again, the Asura showered him with arrows.

5. Lord Śiva immediately split the cluster of arrows discharged by the powerful Jalandhara by means of his own excellent arrows. This was not surprising for the annihilator of the three worlds.

6. Seeing Śiva exhibiting wonderful feats of valour, Jalandhara created Pārvatī by means of his illusion in order to delude Śiva.

7. Śiva saw Pārvatī tied to the chariot and crying.

She was being harrassed by Niśumbha, Śumbha and other Daityas.

8. On seeing that in her plight, Śiva became dispirited and dejected in the mind like an ordinary man pursuing the way of the world.

9. He, an expert in various kinds of sports, remained silent with face drooping down, utterly dejected, exhausted and forgetful of his own prowess.

10. Then Jalandhara hurriedly hit Śiva in his chest, belly and the head with three arrows that went deep down as far as their feathered tail.

11. Then within a trice, lord Śiva, the principle of perfect wisdom, expert in great sports, assumed a terrific form, dreadfully blazing.

12. On seeing his excessively terrible form, the Daityas fled to the ten different quarters. They were unable to stay facing him.

13. O great sage, even Śumbha and Niśumbha who were renowned for their prowess could not stand in the battle ground.

14. The illusion created by Jalandhara had vanished in an instant. In that all out battle there was great hue and cry.

15. On seeing Śumbha and Niśumbha fleeing, the infuriated Śiva rebuked them and cursed as follows.

Śiva said:—

16. "You are wicked and excessively roguish. You have offended me by harassing Pārvatī. Now both of you have deserted the battle ground.

17. A person fleeing the battle ground shall not be killed. So I do not kill you. Since you have escaped from a fight with me you would be killed by Pārvatī."[232]

18. Even as Śiva was saying, Jalandhara, son of the ocean, became very furious with Śiva like the blazing fire.

19. One after the other, he showered many sharp

232. As cursed by Śiva, the Asuras Śumbha and Niśumbha were killed by Pārvatī later on. For the detailed description of their destruction, see Mārkaṇḍeya P.

arrows on Śiva in the battle. The whole of the Earth became enveloped in darkness by his arrows.

20. Śiva split the arrows swiftly, the powerful Daitya hit the bull with an iron club.

21. Due to that blow the bull turned away from the battle field. Even when dragged by Śiva it did not stand there.

22. Then the great Śiva put forth an unbearable splendour visible to all in the battle field. O great sage, this is true.

23. Then the infuriated Śiva assuming a terrible form, became as dreadful as the fire of dissolution, all of a sudden.

24. On seeing the Daitya standing in front like the lofty peak of Meru and hearing from others that he could not be killed, he stood ready for it.

25. As desired by Brahmā, the lord protector of the worlds decided to kill Jalandhara, blessing him in the heart of his heart.

26. Becoming excessively angry, the trident bearing deity made a mysteriously terrible wheel in the great waters by means of his big toe indulging in a divine sport.

27. Creating a sharp wheel in the waters of the ocean and remembering that the three worlds had been harassed by Jalandhara, the lord Śiva who had slain Dakṣa, Andhaka Antaka and destroyed the three cities and the sacrifice of Dakṣa[233] and annihilated the three worlds said laughingly.

Śiva said:—

28. O Jalandhara, if you are powerful enough to lift the wheel created by me with the leg in the great waters, you will be competent to stand and fight with me, not otherwise.

Sanatkumāra said:—

29. On hearing his words the Daitya's eyes gleamed fiercely with anger. He looked at Śiva as if burning him with his eyes and said:—

233. For the destruction of Dakṣa's sacrifice see SP. RS. Section 2. Chs 29-37. For the destruction of Andhaka, ibid. Section 5. Chs 42-49.

Jalandhara said:—

30-31. After uplifting the wheel, I shall be killing you with your Gaṇas. Like Garuḍa killing the serpents I shall kill all the people in the world along with the gods. I can destroy the mobile and immobile along with Indra. O lord Śiva, who is there in the three worlds that can escape being pierced by my arrows ?

32. Even in my childhood, lord Brahmā had been defeated by my vigour. That powerful Brahmā is in my abode now along with the sages and leading gods.

33. Within a trice, the entire universe of the mobile and immobile has been burnt by me. O Śiva, what can be done by you or by your penance? Even lord Brahmā has been defeated.

34. Indra, Agni, Yama, Kubera, Vāyu, and Varuṇa and others were unable to endure my valour like the serpents unable to bear even the odour of the lord of birds.

35. O Śiva, I have never been obstructed either in the heaven or on the earth. I have gone over all the mountains and crushed all the leading Gaṇas.

36. To remove the itching sensation in my arms I have hit the lofty mountain Mandara, the glorious mountain Nīla and the lustrous mountain Meru.

37. Just for the sport the river Gaṅgā was checked by me on the Himālaya mountain. Even my servants were victorious over the gods, my enemies.

38. I seized the submarine fire[234] and closed its mouth when the entire ocean became one single unit instantaneously.

39. Airāvata and other elephants have been hurled into the ocean. Lord Indra along with his chariot has been thrown by me a hundred Yojanas away.

40. Even Guruḍa has been bound by me along with Viṣṇu by means of the serpent noose. Urvaśī[235] and other women have been imprisoned by me.

234. The submarine fire (Baḍavā) is a flame with the head of a horse that consumes the water of the rivers falling into the ocean. When it is incapacitated, the water overflows the shore and drowns the universe. The entire units of creation are then drawn together and remain invisible in the ocean.

235. The celestial damsels, Urvaśī, Rambhā, Menakā, Tilottamā and others are the symbols of heavenly beauty.

41. O Śiva, you do not know me the conqueror of the three worlds, Jalandhara, the great Daitya and the powerful son of the ocean.

Sanatkumāra said:—

42. After saying this to lord Śiva, the son of the ocean did not move nor did he remember the Dānavas killed in the battle.

43. Lord Śiva was slighted and insulted by means of harsh words by the haughty impudent Daitya after slapping each arm by the other forcibly.

44. On hearing the inauspicious words of the Daitya, lord Śiva laughed mockingly and became furious.

45. Śiva held in his hand the wheel Sudarśana which he had made with his toe and got ready to kill him.

46. Lord Śiva hurled the discus Sudarśana which resembled a crore suns and the fire of dissolution.

47. Blazing the heaven and the earth, the discus hit Jalandhara and severed his head with wide gaping eyes.

48. The body of the son of the ocean fell on the ground from the chariot making the earth resonant. The head too fell. There was a great hue and cry.

49. His body fell in two halves like the mountain of collyrium split by the thunderbolt and hurled in the ocean.

50. The whole universe was filled with his terrible blood O great sage, the entire earth became deformed.

51. His entire blood and flesh, at the bidding of Śiva was taken to the hell Mahāraurava[236] and became a big pit of blood there.

52. His splendour that came out of his body merged into Śiva just like the splendour that came out of the body of Vṛndā and merged into Pārvatī.

53. On seeing Jalandhara killed, the gods, the Gandharvas and the serpents became highly delighted and said "Well done, O lord".

54. The gods, Siddhas and great sages were delighted. Making showers of flowers they sang his glory loudly.

236. Mahāraurava is one of the many hells to which the souls of the wicked are sent. But as Jalandhara had emanated from Rudra, his soul was merged into Rudra's soul but his flesh and blood went to Mahāraurava hell and were turned into a pool of blood.

55. The celestial damsels excited by love and joy danced. In the company of Kinnaras they sang in harmonious sweet voice.

56. O sage, the quarters became clear when Vṛndā's husband was killed. The three winds, gentle to the touch and sanctifying, blew.

57. The moon became cool. The sun blazed brilliantly. The fires blazed quietly. The sky became clear.

58. O sage, thus the entire universe of the three worlds regained their earlier health and normalcy much when the son of the ocean was killed by Śiva of infinite forms.

CHAPTER TWENTYFIVE

(*Prayer by the gods*)

Sanatkumāra said:—

1. Then Brahmā, other gods and the sages eulogised lord Śiva humbly by means of pleasing words.

The gods said:—

2. O great lord, lord of the gods favourably disposed to those who seek refuge, you always bestow happiness upon the saintly men and quell the misery of your devotees.

3. O lord, you exhibit wonderfully good divine sports and are available by devotion. You are incapable of being attained or propitiated by the evil-minded. Be favourable to us always.

4. Even the Veda does not know your greatness in reality. Noble men sing your great glory to the extent of their intellect.

5. Indra[237] and others sing your secret greatness always with pleasure and sanctify their own tongue.

237. Indra is called "the thousand-faced". In fact he is 'the thousand-eyed God'. According to the Puranic tradition, Indra seduced Ahalyā the wife of the sage Gautama, whereupon the sage cursed him to bear on his body a thousand marks resembling the female organ which were afterwards changed to eyes. He is therefore called Sahasrākṣa 'the thousand-eyed'.

6. O lord of gods, by your favour even a sluggish person realizes Brahman. The Vedas say that you are always attainable by devotion.

7. You are merciful to the distressed. You are all pervasive. You manifest yourself by good devotion. You are free from aberrations. You are the goal of the good.

8. O Lord Śiva, by devotion alone people have attained the power of miracles. They became indifferent to the pleasures they enjoy or the miseries they have to face.

9. O lord, it was by his devotion alone that the founder of the Yadu family, the devotee Dāśārha and his wife Kalāvatī attained great success.

10. O lord of gods, the king Mitrasaha and his beloved queen Madayantī attained great salvation through devotion to you.

11. The daughter of the elder brother of the king of Kekayas named Sauminī attained happiness inaccessible to even great Yogins, by his devotion to you.

12. O lord, by devotion to you the excellent king Vimarṣaṇa enjoyed worldly pleasures for seven births in various ways and ultimately attained the goal of the good.

13. The excellent king Candrasena enjoyed all pleasures, became free from misery and experienced great happiness here and hereafter by devotion to you.

14. Śrīkara, the son of a cowherdess and the disciple of Mahāvīra enjoyed the goal of the good here and great happiness hereafter by his devotion to you.

15. You removed the misery of the king Satyaratha and you conferred good goal on him. You enabled the prince Dharmagupta to cross the ocean of worldly existence and made him happy here.

16. O great lord, mercifully you made the brahmin Śucivrata strictly adhering to devotion to you gain knowledge along with his mother and made him rich too.

17. By his devotion to you the excellent king Citravarman perpetually enjoyed in this world the pleasures inaccessible even to the gods and attained salvation, the goal of the good.

18. The prince Candrāṅgada along with his wife

Sīmantinī got rid of all miseries, enjoyed happiness and attained great goal.

19. The brahmin named Mandara who became a base knave indulging in lecherous association with prostitutes, O Śiva, worshipped one of your women devotees and attained salvation along with her.

20. O lord, thanks to the favour of a devotee of yours, the prince Bhadrāyu attained happiness free from pain and achieved great goal along with his mother.

21. O lord Śiva, even wicked sinners eating forbidden foodstuffs and indulging in sexual dalliance with all sorts of women, have been liberated by their service to you.

22. O Śiva, Śambara a devotee of yours, smearing himself with the ashes of the funeral pyre, attained your region along with his wife, thanks to his regular adherence to Bhasma.

23-25. O lord, the son of Bhadrasena and the son of his minister both of virtuous and auspicious rites and regular wearers of Rudrākṣa beads, enjoyed good pleasures here and became liberated, thanks to your grace. The two devotees who had been monkey and a cock in a previous birth became the ornaments of Rudra. O lord, always engaged in uplifting the devotees, the two courtesans Piṅgalā and Mahānandā attained the goal of the good, thanks to their devotion to you.

26. The brahmin girl Śāradā who had become a widow in childhood, was fortunate to regain her lost husband and was blessed with sons, thanks to the power of devotion to you.

27. Binduga, a brahmin only in name, a harlot monger and his wife Cañculā[238] attained great salvation on hearing your glory.

28. O lord Śiva, friend of the distressed, storehouse of mercy, many living beings have attained the goal in this way.

29. O lord Śiva, you are greater than Prakṛti and Puruṣa. You are the Brahman. You are devoid of attributes

238. For the narratives of Binduga and Cañculā see ŚP chs 3-5 'the glory of Śivapurāṇa'. Vañcukā in the printed text is a misprint for Cañculā.

as well as the support of attributes in the forms of Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Rudra.

30. You are free from aberrations, O lord of all, you perform different activities incessantly. O lord Śiva, we all, Brahmā and others are your slaves.

31. O lord of gods, be pleased. O Śiva, protect us ever. O lord, we are your subjects and we ever seek refuge in you."

Sanatkumāra said:—

32. After eulogising Brahmā, other gods and the great sages, the gods remained silent with their minds fixed on Śiva's feet.

33. The great lord Śiva heard the auspicious prayer of the gods, conferred boons on them and then vanished immediately from the scene.

34. Brahmā and other gods were jubilant as the enemies had been killed. Delightfully singing the great glory of Śiva, they left for their own abodes.

35. This great narrative describing the suppression of Jalandhara is a sanctifying story of lord Śiva that destroys all sins.

36. This prayer of the gods is holy and destructive of sins. It bestows happiness on the devotees and is delightful to Śiva.

37. He who reads or teaches the two narratives, enjoys great happiness here and becomes the lord of Gaṇas hereafter.

CHAPTER TWENTYSIX

(*The Vanishing of Viṣṇu's delusion*)

Viṣṇu said:—

1. O son of Brahmā, obeisance be to you. O excellent devotee of Śiva, you are blessed, since you have narrated this highly divine and auspicious story of Śiva.

2. O sage, now narrate lovingly the story of Viṣṇu. After enchanting Vṛndā what did he do? Where did he go?

Sanatkumāra said :—

3. O Vyāsa, listen. O intelligent excellent devotee of Śiva, listen to the good story of Viṣṇu mingled with the story of Śiva.

4. When Brahmā and other gods became silent, lord Śiva, favourably disposed to those who seek refuge in him, was delighted and said.

Śiva said: —

5. O Brahmā, O ye excellent gods, it is for you that Jalandhara has been killed by me although he was a part of myself. Truth. It is the truth that I say.

6. O dear gods, tell me the truth. Have or have not you attained happiness ? It is for you that I indulge in sports though I am always free from all aberrations.

Sanatkumāra said :—

7. Then Brahmā and other gods, with eyes blooming with delight, bowed to Śiva with bent heads and mentioned to him the activities of Viṣṇu.

The gods said:—

8. "O great lord, all the gods have been saved by you from the danger of the enemy but another event has happened. What shall we do in that respect ?

9. O lord, Vṛndā was fascinated by Viṣṇu. She burnt herself on the pyre and attained the great goal.

10. But Viṣṇu deluded by your illusion is excessively agitated by the beauty of Vṛndā. He has smeared himself with the ashes from her pyre.

11. Although advised and consoled by the Siddhas and sages, and pacified by us with respect, Viṣṇu deluded by your illusion does not come to his former self.

12. O lord Śiva, be pleased. Restore Viṣṇu to his former self. This entire creation born of Prakṛti and consisting of the mobile and immobile beings, is subservient to you".

Sanatkumāra said:—

13. On hearing these words of the gods, lord Śiva of

great sports and free to act as he pleases replied to them as they stood with palms joined in reverence.

Lord Śiva said:—

14. O Brahmā, O gods, you listen to my words attentively. My illusion deludes all the worlds. It cannot be transgressed.

15. The entire universe including gods and human beings is subservient to it. Viṣṇu too was deluded by that illusion and became a prey to the lustful love.

16. That illusion is given various names : Umā, Mahādevī, the mother of the three deities, the greatest, primordial Mūlaprakṛti and the lovely woman Pārvatī.

17. O gods, seek refuge in that fascinating goddess named illusion, for the removal of Viṣṇu's delusion. She is the bestower of cherished desires and worthy of being sought refuge in.

18 Sing the eulogy that satisfies my Śakti. If she is delighted, she will carry out your tasks.

Sanatkumāra said:—

19. O Vyāsa, after saying this to the gods, the five-faced lord Śiva vanished suddenly along with his Gaṇas.

20. At the bidding of Śiva, Brahmā and other gods including Indra mentally eulogised to the primordial Prakṛti favourably disposed to her devotees.

The gods said :—

21. We bow to the primordial Prakṛti from which emanate the three attributes Sattva, Rajas and Tamas that cause creation, sustenance and annihilation, and by whose desire the universe is evolved and dissolved.

22. May the great illusion save us, the great Prakṛti that presides over the twentythree principles,[239] well enunciated

239. The printed text is corrupt. Read त्रयो विंशतिगणान् for त्रयोविंशगुणान् Cp. Bhāgavatā त्रयोविंशादितत्त्वानां गणम् 3.6.2 : The group of 23 Tattvas consists of 10 senes, 5 gross and 5 subtle elements, intellect, ego and mind.

in the universe. We bow to the primordial Prakṛti whose forms and activities are not known to the three worlds.

23. We bow to the primordial Prakṛti favourably disposed to the devotees. Persons endowed with devotion to her are not bedevilled by poverty, delusion and destruction.

24. O great goddess, please carry out our tasks. O Pārvatī, please remove the delusion of Viṣṇu. O goddess Durgā, obeisance be to you.

25-26. O Śivā, when the fight between Jalandhara and Śiva started, for killing Jalandhara, Vṛndā was deluded by Viṣṇu at the bidding of Gaurī. She was made to forsake her virtue and reduced to ashes in the fire. She attained salvation.

27. Jalandhara was slain in the battle by Śiva who took pity on us and who always blesses his devotees. We have been relieved from his fear.

28. It is at his bidding that we all have sought refuge in you. You and Śiva, O goddess, are always engaged in uplifting your devotees.

29. Infatuated by the beauty of Vṛndā, Viṣṇu is staying there itself. He has lost his balance. He is deluded. He has smeared himself with the ashes from her pyre.

30. O great goddess deluded by your illusion, Viṣṇu does not come to his own though advised and consoled by the gods and Siddhas.

31. O great goddess, be merciful. Enlighten Viṣṇu so that he shall return to his region and carry out the task of the gods with a settled mind.

32. Eulogising thus, the gods saw a sphere of refulgence in the sky pervading all the quarters with its flames.

33. O Vyāsa, Brahmā and other gods including Indra heard a celestial voice from the sky bestowing their desire.

The celestial voice said:—

34. O gods, it is I who stand in three forms by the variety of the three attributes, Rajas, Sattva and Tamas. The three forms are Gaurī, Lakṣmī, and Sarasvatī.

35. Hence you go to them respectfully at my bidding. If they are pleased they will fulfil your desire.

Sanatkumāra said:—

36. Even as the gods were listening to this speech with eyes gaping with wonder, the refulgence vanished.

37. On hearing the speech, the gods, urged by it bowed respectfully to Gaurī, Lakṣmī and Sarasvatī.

38. Brahmā and other gods eulogised the goddesses with various speeches and bowed their heads.

39. Then the goddesses appeared in front of them, suddenly, O Vyāsa, illuminating the quarters with their wonderful brilliance.

40 On seeing them, the gods eulogised them with great devotion and delighted minds. They submitted what they wanted to be carried out.

41. Thus bowed and eulogised, the goddesses who are favourably disposed to the devotees, faced the gods and addressed them eagerly after giving them seeds.

The goddesses said:—

42. "Sow these seeds in the place where Viṣṇu is standing. Then your task will be fulfilled."

Sanatkumāra said:—

43. O sage, after saying this, the goddesses, the Śaktis of Śiva, Viṣṇu and Brahmā, possessed of the three attributes, vanished.

44. Then Brahmā and other gods including Indra took the seeds and went to the place where Viṣṇu was standing.

45. The gods sowed those seeds in the ground where the pyre of Vṛndā had been lit. O sage, they stayed there thinking these as parts of Śiva's Śakti.

46. Out of the seeds sown, O great sage, three plants shot up—the Myrobalan, the Jasmine and the holy basil.

47. The Myrobalan is born of the creator's Śakti, the jasmine of Lakṣmī and holy basil of Gaurī, born of the attributes Tamas, Sattva and Rajas.

48. O sage, on seeing the plants in the forms of ladies Viṣṇu stood up with excitement of infatuation over them.

49. On seeing them he was deluded and his mind became overwhelmed by lust. The two plants—the holy basil and Myrobalan looked at him lovingly.

50. The womanlike plant born out of the seed by the Śakti of Lakṣmī became jealous of him.

51. Hence the plant came to be called Varvarī[240] (a kind of wild basil) and was despised by all. The Dhātrī and the Tulasī are always pleasing to him due to their love and affection.

52. Then Viṣṇu forgot his sorrow. Accompanied by them he went to Vaikuṇṭha fully satisfied. He was bowed to by all the gods.

53. O great brahmin, myrobolan and the holy basil shall be understood as the favourites of gods in the month of Kārttika, especially of Viṣṇu.

54. There too, O great sage, the holy basil is the most blessed and the most excellent. Except Gaṇeśa it delights every deity and bestows all desires.

55. On seeing Viṣṇu settled again in Vaikuṇṭha, Brahmā, Indra and other gods bowed to and eulogised him and then left for their respective abodes.

56. O excellent sage, Viṣṇu too, settled in his own world, freed from delusion and enlightened, became happy remembering Śiva as before.

57. This is the narrative that destroys sins, bestows desires to all men. It increases perfect knowledge and quells all aberrations of base lust.

58. He who reads or teaches this every day, he who hears or narrates this with devotion attains the greatest goal.

59. The intelligent man who reads this most excellent narrative and goes to war will certainly be victorious. There is no doubt about it.

60. This yields the knowledge of Vedas to the brahmins, victory to the Kṣatriyas, wealth to the Vaiśyas and happiness to the Śūdras.

61. O Vyāsa, it confers devotion to Śiva, it destroys the sins of all persons, it bestows the good goal here and hereafter.

240. Mālatī (Jasmine), born of the seed provided by Lakṣmī, is called Barbarī or Varvarī and forbidden in the worship of Viṣṇu.

CHAPTER TWENTYSEVEN

(*The birth of Śaṅkhacūḍa*)

Sanatkumāra said:—

1. O sage, now listen to another story of Śiva lovingly, by listening to which the devotion to Śiva is stabilised.

2. The story narrates how the heroic Dānava Śaṅkhacūda who harassed the gods was killed by Śiva in the battle by means of his trident.

3. O Vyāsa, listen lovingly to the story of Śiva, divine, holy and destructive of sins. I shall narrate the same because of my affection to you.

4. The sage Kaśyapa son of Marīci and grandson of Brahmā was a virtuous Prajāpati engaged in creation. He possessed great learning.

5. Dakṣa gave him his thirteen daughters in marriage. The descendants of these women are many and they cannot be enumerated easily.

6. The whole universe consisting of gods and others the mobile and immobile is born of them. Who in the three worlds can mention this in detail?

7. Listen to what is relevant to the context wherein the divine sports of Śiva too can be seen. It is conducive to the increase of devotion. I am narrating the same.

8. Among the wives of Kaśyapa the excellent lady Danu was one. She was very beautiful, chaste and tenderly nurtured by her husband with all devotion and love.

9. Many powerful sons were born to that lady Danu. Their names are not mentioned O sage, by the fear of dilation.

10. One of them is Vipracitti who was very powerful and valorous. His virtuous son Dambha of self-control was a great devotee of Viṣṇu.

11-12. No son was born to him. Hence the hero became worried. He made the preceptor Śukra his initiator and learnt the mantra of Kṛṣṇa. He performed a great penance in the holy centre Puṣkara[241] for a hundred thousand years.

241. Puṣkara is a sacred forest near Ajmer in Rajasthan There is a celebrated lake where Brahmā set up a phallic image of Śiva. It is a famous place of pilgrimage in Rājaputānā.

Seating himself in a stable pose he performed the Japa of Kṛṣṇa mantra for a long time.

13. While be was performing the penance, an unbearable refulgence sprang up blazing from his head and spread everywhere.

14. All the gods, sages and Manus were scorched by that. With Indra ahead they sought refuge in Brahmā.

15. Bowing to Brahmā, the bestower of riches, they eulogised him and narrated to him this event.

16. On hearing that, Brahmā accompanied them to Vaikuṇṭha in order to tell the same to Viṣṇu in its entirety.

17. After going there they stood humbly joining their palms in reverence. After bowing to him they eulogised Viṣṇu the lord of the three worlds, the great saviour.

The gods said:—

18. "O lord of gods we do not know how this happened to cause this. Please tell us. By what refulgence have all of us been scorched ?

19. O friend of the distressed, you are the protector of the distressed and dispirited servants. Save, O lord of Lakṣmī who are worthy of being sought refuge by us.

Sanatkumāra said:—

20. On hearing these words of Brahmā and other gods, Viṣṇu who is favourably disposed to those who seek refuge, said laughingly and lovingly.

Viṣṇu said:—

21. "O gods, be calm and unperturbed, do not be afraid. No deluge will take place, this is not the time of dissolution.

22. The Asura Dambha a devotee of mine is performing a penance seeking for a son. I shall bestow a boon and quieten him."

Sanatkumāra said:—

23. O sage, on being consoled thus, Brahmā and

other gods became encouraged and they returned to their respective abodes.

24. In order to grant the boon, Viṣṇu went to Puṣkara where Dambha was performing penance.

25. On reaching there Viṣṇu consoled Dambha who was repeating his name and told him the pleasing words— "Mention the boon you wish to be granted."

26. On hearing his words and seeing Viṣṇu standing in front, the Dānava bowed with great devotion and eulogised him again and again.

Dambha said:—

27. "O lord of gods, Obeisance be to you, O Lotus-eyed one, O lord of Lakṣmī, O lord of the three worlds, please take pity on me.

28. Please give me a powerful and valorous son who will be your devotee, who will be invincible to the gods and who will conquer the three worlds."

Sanatkumāra said:—

29. On being thus requested by the lord of Dānavas, Viṣṇu granted him the boon. O sage, making him desist from the penance he vanished from the place.

30. When Viṣṇu went away, the lord of Dānavas performed obeisance to that direction and returned home, his penance having been fulfilled and his desires realised.

31. Within a short time, his fortunate wife became pregnant. Illuminating the inner apartments of her abode by her brilliance she shone much.

32. O sage, it was Sudāmā a cowherd, one of the leading comrades of Kṛṣṇa who had been cursed by Rādhā, that entered her womb.

33. At the proper time the chaste lady gave birth to a brilliant son. The father invited sages and performed the post-natal rites.

34. O excellent brahmin, when the boy was born there was great jubilation. On an auspicious day the father named him "Śaṅkhacūḍa."

35. In the abode of his father he grew up like the

moon in the bright half. Learning all lores in childhood he became resplendent.

36. With his childish sports he increased the parents' delight. He became a special favourite of all the members of the family.

CHAPTER TWENTYEIGHT

(The penance and marriage of Śaṅkhacūḍa)

Sanatkumāra said:—

1. As instructed by Jaigīṣavya, Śaṅkhacūḍa performed a penance in Puṣkara for a long time in order to propitiate Brahmā with devotion.

2. He concentrated his mind, controlled the senses and organs of activities, and muttered the mantra of Brahmā imparted by his preceptor.

3. Lord Brahmā, the preceptor of the worlds, went to Śaṅkhacūḍa who was practising penance at Puskara in order to grant him the boon soon.

4. Brahmā said to him : "Tell me the boon you wish to choose." On seeing Brahmā, the king of Dānavas bowed to him humbly and eulogised him with words of devotion.

5. He requested Brahmā to grant him the power of being invincible to the gods. With a delighted mind, Brahmā said "Be it so."

6. He gave Śaṅkhacūḍa the divine amulet of Śrīkṛṣṇa the most auspicious of all auspicious things in the universe, that yielded victory everywhere.

7. "You now go to Badari. There you marry Tulasī who is performing penance just at her own will.

8. She is the daughter of Dharmadhvaja." Brahmā instructed him thus and vanished even as he was watching him.

9. Then Śaṅkhacūḍa whose penance had been fruitful in the holy centre of Puṣkara tied the most auspicious amulet round his neck.

10. At the behest of Brahmā, the Dānava whose desire had been achieved through penance went to Badarikāśrama[242] with delight beaming in his face.

11. The Dānava Śaṅkhacūḍa casually visited the place where the daughter of Dharmadhvaja, Tulasī was performing the penance.

12. The smiling beautiful gentle woman fully bedecked in ornaments cast loving glances at the great man.

13. On seeing that charming, tender, beautiful and chaste lady, he stopped near her and spoke to her sweetly.

Śaṅkhacūḍa said:—

14. "Who are you, please? Whose daughter? What are you doing? Why do you stay here and observe silence. Consider me as your devoted slave."

Sanatkumāra said:—

15. On hearing these words she spoke to him lovingly.

Tulasī said:—

16. I am the daughter of Dharmadhvaja. I am performing penance. I stay in this hermitage. Who are you? You can go as you please.

17. The entire class of women is fascinating. It enchants even Brahmā, not to speak of others. It is censurable, poisonous and deceptive. It is illusion and a fetter to the devout and the faithful.

Sanatkumāra said:—

18. Tulasī thus spoke to the passionate Dambha and stopped. On seeing her smiling he began to say.

242. Badarikāśrama, known as Badari Nārāyaṇa or Badarīnātha is situated on a peak of the Himalayas in Garhwal. It has a temple of Viṣṇu in his dual form of Nara-Nārāyaṇa. According to Varāha Purāṇa (140. 4-5) it is one of the three abodes of Viṣṇu on the Himalayas, the other two being Kokāmukha and Lohārgala. For details see Sircar GAMI. P. 219.

Śaṅkhacūḍa said:—

19. O gentle lady, what you said now is not entirely false. It is partially true also. Now listen to me.

20. You are the foremost among chaste ladies. I am not a lusty person of sinful nature. I think you too are not like that.

21. I come to you now at the behest of Brahmā. O gently lady, I shall take your hand by the Gāndharva rites of marriage.

22. I am Śaṅkhacūḍa, the router of the gods. O gentle lady, don't you know me ? Have I never been heard by you ?

23. I am a scion of the family of Danu. I am a Dānava, the son of Dambha. In the previous birth I was the cowherd Sudāmā, a comrade of Kṛṣṇa.

24. Due to the curse of Rādhā I have become a Dānava now. By the favour of Kṛṣṇa I remember events of previous birth. I know everything.

Sanatkumāra said:—

25. After saying thus to her, Śaṅkhacūḍa stopped. Tulasī who was thus addressed truthfully and respectfully by the king of Dānavas, was delighted and she spoke smilingly.

Tulasī said:—

26. I have now been overpowered by you who have Sāttvika thoughts. That man is blessed in the world who is not overwhelmed by a woman.

27. Even though he may be the observer of sacred rites, if he is overpowered by a woman he becomes impure and unclean, so he remains for ever. The manes, gods and human beings censure him.

28-29. A brahmin is purified from impurity arising from births or deaths in the family, after the tenth day. A Kṣatriya in twelve days, a Vaiśya in fifteen days and a Śūdra in a month. This is what the Vedas enjoin. But a henpecked man can never be purified till death.

30. The manes do not receive willingly the balls of

rice or holy waters offered by him. Nor do the gods accept his offering of fruits and flowers.

31. Of what avail are words of wisdom, penance, Japas, Homas, worships, learning or charitable gifts to that wretch whose mind is deadened by his thoughts of women?

32. You have been tested by me in order to know your knowledge and power. A woman must test her bridegroom before wooing him.

Sanatkumāra said:—

33. Even as Tulasī was saying so, Brahmā the creator came there and spoke these words.

Brahmā said:—

34. "O Śaṅkhacūḍa, why do you hold discussion with her? Marry her according to the Gāndharva[243] form of marriage.

35. You are jewel among men. And she, the chaste lady, is a jewel among women. The union of an intelligent lady with an intelligent man must necessarily be virtuous.

36. O king, unless forced who will abandon a chance of happiness? He who does so unforced is a brute. There is no doubt about it.

37. O chaste lady, why shall you test such a good and noble husband? He can suppress the gods, Asuras and Dānavas too.

38. O beautiful woman, you may sport with him for long, as you please, in different centres all over the world.

39. In the end, he will attain Śrīkṛṣṇa again in the Goloka. After he is dead, you will attain the four-armed lord in Vaikuṇṭha."

Sanatkumāra said:—

40. After conferring blessings, Brahmā returned to his

243. According to Manu (iii. 32) in the Gāndharva form of marriage, the bride and the bridegroom met each other of their own accord and their meeting consummated in copulation born of passion. It was called Gāndharva because it prevailed in a tribe called Gandharva which lived on the slopes of the Himalayas It was considered the most natural form because the bride and the bridegroom attracted each other without any force or fraud. It became obsolete because it was performed without sacred rituals and originated from lust. See H.S. PP. 162-164.

abode. The Dānava accepted her by means of the Gāndharva rite.

41. After marrying her he went to his father's place. In the beautiful apartment he sported with her.

CHAPTER TWENTYNINE

(*The previous birth of Śaṅkhacūḍa*)

Sanatkumāra said:—

1. When Śaṅkhacūḍa returned home duly married, after performing the penance and receiving the boons, Dānavas and others rejoiced.

2. Leaving their world and accompanied by their preceptor, the Asuras assembled and approached the Dānava.

3. They bowed to that resplendent Dānava their lord, humbly and eulogised him with love and respect. They stayed with him alone.

4. On seeing the family preceptor, Śaṅkhacūḍa, son of Dambha bowed to him with devotion and prostrated before him with respect.

5. After conferring his excellent benediction, Śukra, the family preceptor, narrated the tales of the gods and Dānavas.

6. He expatiated on the natural enmity of the two, the invariable defeat of the Asuras, the victory of the gods and the help rendered by Bṛhaspati.

7. With the consent of the Asuras, the preceptor Śukra made him the emperor of Dānavas, Asuras and others with jubilant festivities.

8. The delighted Asuras were highly joyous. They offered him presents lovingly.

9. The son of Dambha, the heroic and valorous Śaṅkhacūḍa shone as the Emperor of Asuras.

10. Taking a vast army of Daityas, Dānavas and Rākṣasas and seated in his chariot, he marched quickly to the city of Indra[244] with the intention to conquer it.

11. The leader of the Dānavas going in the midst of

244. The capital city of Indra's dominions, also called Amarāvatī, is situated in the vicinity of Mount Meru. It is also called Devapura, city of the gods.

his attendants shone as the moon in the midst of stars or as the sun in the midst of planets.

12. On hearing that Śaṅkhacūḍa was coming, Indra the king of heaven, accompanied by the gods made preparations for a fight.

13. Then a tremendous fight ensued between the Asuras and the gods delighting the heroic and terrifying the cowardly. It caused hairs to stand on end.

14. When the warriors roared in the battle, there was a tumultuous noise. The sound of drums and other instruments encouraged the warriors.

15. The powerful gods fought with the Asuras ferociously and defeated them. They were afraid and fled.

16. On seeing them fleeing, their leader Śaṅkhacūḍa roared like a lion and fought with the gods.

17. With his power and force he distressed the gods. The gods could not endure his dazzling brilliance. They fled.

18. The gods thus vanquished took shelter in the caves of the mountains. They lost their independence. They were subjugated. They lost their lustre like the frozen sea.

19. Thus the son of Dambha, the valorous leader of the Dānavas, conquered all the worlds and took up the powers of the gods.

20. He kept the three worlds under his control. He partook of all the shares in sacrifices. He became Indra and ruled the universe.

21. He carried the tasks of Kubera, Moon, Sun, Fire, Yama and Vāyu, according to his ability.

22-23. The great hero, the powerful Śaṅkhacūḍa became overlord of the gods, Asuras, Dānavas, Rākṣasas, Gandharvas, serpents, Kinnaras, Nāgas and in fact of all the people of the three worlds.

24. Thus Śaṅkhacūḍa enjoyed the kingdom of the worlds for many years. He became a great Emperor.

25. There was no famine, plague or pestilence in his realm. The planets were not inauspicious. There was no

worry or sickness among the people. The subjects were happy for ever.

26. Even without being tilled, the earth yielded plenty of plants and vegetation. Many medicinal herbs grew up. Plants remained always fruitful and juicy.

27. The oceans yielded plenty of gems and jewels. Abundant flowers and fruits grew up on the Earth. Rivers flowed with pure crystal clear water.

28. Excepting the gods all living beings were happy and free from distress. The people of four castes and stages of life maintained their respective duties and activities.

29. When he ruled, none was miserable in the three worlds. Only the gods were reduced to misery and that too by their fratricidal jealousy and enmity.

30. Śaṅkhacūḍa was a close friend of Kṛṣṇa, the resident of Goloka. He was powerful, and always engaged in devotion to Kṛṣṇa.

31. O sage, although he was a Dānava, his nature was different. He was born as a Dānava due to a previous curse.

32. O dear, thereafter, the defeated gods, deprived of their kingdom, consulted among themselves and went to Brahmā's assembly chamber along with the sages.

33. They saw the creator and bowed to and eulogised him. With distress they explained to him everything in detail.

34. After consoling the gods and the sages, Brahmā accompanied by them went to Vaikuṇṭha that yields happiness to the good.

35. Accompanied by the gods, Brahmā saw the lord of Lakṣmī decorated with a crown, earrings and a garland of wild flowers.

36-37. On seeing Viṣṇu bearing Śaṅkha, Cakra, mace and the lotus, the lord with four arms, yellow garments, accompanied by Nandana, Siddhas, Brahmā and other gods bowed to the lord along with the great sages. They eulogised him with palms joined in reverence.

The gods said:—

38. "O lord of the universe, lord of the gods, O lor

of Vaikuṇṭha, save us who have sought refuge in you, O illustrious Viṣṇu, O elderly one in the three worlds.

39. O lord Viṣṇu, O lord of the three worlds, you alone are the protector of the worlds. O supporter of Lakṣmī, O Govinda, O the vital air of the devotees, Obeisance be to you."

40. After eulogising thus, all the gods cried in front of Viṣṇu. On hearing it lord Viṣṇu spoke to Brahmā thus.

Viṣṇu said:—

41. Why have you come to Vaikuṇṭha inaccessible even to Yogins. What distress has befallen you. Tell me just here.

Sanatkumāra said:—

42-43. On hearing the words of Viṣṇu and bowing to him with palms joined in reverence he narrated to him the activities of Śaṅkhacūḍa and the distress suffered by the gods.

44. On hearing that Viṣṇu who knew everything laughed. The lord then told Brahmā the secret of Śaṅkhacūḍa.

Lord Viṣṇu said:—

45. O lotus-born Brahmā, I know everything about Śaṅkhacūḍa, a great devotee of mine, of great splendour and who had been formerly a cowherd.

46. Hear all the details about him, the old narrative. There is nothing to be suspected. Śiva will necessarily perform what is good.

47-50. His region called Śivaloka is greater than the greatest. It is above everything. Śiva, the supreme Brahman, the great god shines there. He is the presiding deity of Prakṛtī and Puruṣa. He wears three Śaktis. He is both devoid and possessed of attributes.[245] He has the great splendour for his form. O Brahmā, the three deities bringing about creation etc. are born of him.[246] They are Viṣṇu, Brahmā and Śiva endowed with Sāttvika and other

245. See Note 286 P. 379.
246. See Note 272 P. 563. Cp ŚP. RS. V. 30. 34-35.

attributes. He alone is the supreme soul. He sports there with Pārvatī. He is free from illusion. He is the formulator of the eternal and the non-eternal.

51. The Goloka is near it. Śiva's cowshed is situated there. Kṛṣṇa having my form stays there at Śiva's behest.

52. It is to tend his cows and bulls that he has been ordered by him. Deriving happiness from him he too sports there.

53. His wife Rādhā[247] is the mother of the universe. Her form is greater than Prakṛti. It is the fifth[248] sportive form.

54. Many cowherds and cowherdesses born of her live there. They are sportively inclined and follow Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa.

55. That very same (Sudāmā, now born as Śaṅkhacūḍa) has been fascinated by her by Śiva's illusion. Cursed by Rādhā he is born as a Dānava to his distress.

56. Kṛṣṇa has already ordained that the death of Śaṅkhacūḍa will be by Rudra's trident. Casting off his body he will become his comrade again.

57. O lord of gods, knowing this you need not have any fear. Let us seek refuge in Śiva. He will do everything conducive to our good.

58. You, I and the gods stand here fearless (due to that only).

Sanatkumāra said:—

59. After saying this and mentally thinking upon Śiva who, the lord of all, is favourably disposed to his devotees Viṣṇu went to Śivaloka accompanied by Brahmā.

247. Rādhā was a cowherdess and a favourite mistress of Kṛṣṇa. She is worshipped among the Vaiṣṇavas as an incarnation of Lakṣmī as Kṛṣṇa is of Viṣṇu.

248. The energies of Rudra, Viṣṇu and Brahmā are the three embodied forms of Primordial cosmic nature. There is a fourth Energy called Śivā of the attributeless Śiva. Rādhā is the supreme and sportive fifth form of Prakṛti.

CHAPTER THIRTY

(*Prayer to the lord of gods*)

Sanatkumāra said:—

1-2. O Vyāsa, starting then itself along with Brahmā, Viṣṇu, the lord of Lakṣmī, went to Śivaloka, highly divine, propless and unearthly. He was glad and his face beamed with pleasure. The region was strewn over with many gems. It was highly brilliant.

3-4. The first entrance was of variegated nature with many Gaṇas standing there. It was resplendent, lofty and and beautiful. After reaching it he saw the gatekeepers seated on gem-set thrones. They had gem-set ornaments and white garments.

5. They had five faces, three eyes and fair handsome bodies. They were trident-bearing heroes shining with Bhasma and Rudrākṣa.

6. Both Brahmā and Viṣṇu bowed to them humbly and told them that they wanted to see the lord.

7. They permitted them to enter. They saw another door very beautiful, variegated and very brilliant.

8. They informed the gatekeeper of their desire to approach the lord. Permitted by them they entered and saw another door.

9. Thus Brahmā entered through fifteen doors and reached the main threshold. He saw Nandin.

10. After bowing to and eulogising Nandin as Brahmā did before, Viṣṇu was permitted by Nandin and he entered joyously.

11. Going in, they saw the grand assembly chamber of Śiva, highly decorated and thronged by his attendants with lustrous bodies.

12. The attendants had similar forms with lord Śiva. They had ten arms, five faces, three eyes and blue necks. They had auspicious lustre and were brilliant.

13. They were bedecked in ornaments set with gems. They wore Rudrākṣas. They had smeared themselves with the ashes. The chamber was square in shape and beautiful like the lunar sphere.

14. Gems, necklaces, diamonds, etc. increased its brilliance. Valuable precious stones were used to stud them. It was brightened by lotus petals.

15. Māṇikya, Padmarāga and other valuable gems were used in the same. It was very wonderful. It was laid according to the desire of Śiva.

16. It had hundreds of steps leading to it, each made of Syamantaka stone; knotted golden threads joined them. Beautiful sprouts of sandal beautified it.

17. Columns of sapphire supported it. It was richly decorated. The wind wafted fragrance everywhere.

18. The chamber was a thousand Yojanas wide. Many servants were in attendance. Viṣṇu the lord of gods saw Śiva seated along with Pārvatī.

19. Śiva was in the midst of his attendants like the moon surrounded by stars. He was seated in a variegated throne set with valuable gems.

20. He had a crown on his head, earrings in his ears. He was embellished with gem necklaces. Ashes were smeared all over his body. He held a toy lotus.

21. He was smilingly watching the song and dance going on in front of him.

22. He was calm and delighted in the mind. He was highly brilliant. He was chewing the fragrant betel leaves offered by the goddess.

23. He was attended upon by Gaṇas with white chowries and eulogised by Siddhas with stooping shoulders with great devotion.

24-25. The great lord Śiva, the progenitor of the three deities, the lord beyond the reach of attributes, who assumes and discords his forms as he pleases and is invariable, who is free from illusion, unborn, the primordial being, the lord of illusion, greater than the greatest and greater than the Prakṛti and Puruṣa.

26. On seeing Śiva of perfect features, Viṣṇu and Brahmā eulogised him together after bowing to him with palms joined in reverence.

Viṣṇu and Brahmā said:—

27. O lord Śiva, lord of the gods, O supreme Brahman,

lord of all. O quiet one that is beyond the three attributes, O lord progenitor of the three deities.

28. We have sought refuge in you. O lord, save us who are distressed. O lord Śiva, we are harassed by Śaṅkhacūḍa and so dejected and well nigh exhausted. Save us.

29. The region that is adjacent to this place is called Goloka, Lord Kṛṣṇa is its presiding deity.

30. One of his leading attendants and comrades, Sudāmā, cursed by Rādhā and led by fate, has become the Dānava Śaṅkhacūḍa.

31. O Śiva, the gods divested of all powers ousted and harassed by him roam over the Earth now.

32. Except by you he cannot be killed by any one of the gods. Please kill him and render the worlds happy.

33. You alone are devoid as well as possessed of attributes, truthful, of infinite valour, embedded in the good and greater than Prakṛti and Puruṣa.

34. At creation, O lord, you are Brahmā, the creator through Rajas. O protector of the three worlds, in the activity of protection through Sattva you are Viṣṇu.

35. In dissolution through Tamas you are Rudra the annihilator of the universe. In the state free from the three attributes you are Śiva the fourth one, of the form of brilliance.

36. At your behest, Kṛṣṇa the protector, goes to Goloka. Stationed in the middle of your cowshed he sports day and night.

37. You are the cause of all. You are the lord of all. You are Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva. You are free from aberrations. You are the constant witness. You are the supreme soul, the great Īśvara.

38. You are the redeemer of the distressed and the poor, the protector and the kinsman of the distressed, the lord of the worlds. You are favourably disposed to those who seek refuge in you.

39. O lord of Pārvatī, uplift us. O lord Śiva, be pleased. O lord, we are subservient to you. You do as you please, O lord.

Sanatkumāra said:—

40. After saying this, O Vyāsa, those two deities, Viṣṇu and Brahmā bowed to Śiva and stopped. They joined their palms in reverence and stood humbly.

CHAPTER THIRTYONE

(*Śiva's advice*)

Sanatkumāra said:—

1. On hearing these words of the distressed Viṣṇu and Brahmā, Śiva laughingly spoke in the rumbling tone of the cloud.

Śiva said:—

2. "O dear Viṣṇu, O Brahmā, cast off your fear from all sides. Certainly something good will result from the activities of Śaṅkhacūḍa.

3. I know all the details of his activities factually as well as those of Sudāmā the cowherd devotee of Kṛṣṇa.

4. At my bidding Viṣṇu has assumed the form of Kṛṣṇa and is stationed in the cowshed in the beautiful Goloka presided over by me.

5. Considering himself independent under a delusion he indulged in many kinds of sportive dalliance like a deluded licentious person.

6. On seeing his excessive delusion as a result of my deceptive art I suppressed their virtuous intellect and made them suffer curse.

7. Having thus performed my sport, I suppressed the illusion. Regaining knowledge they got rid of delusion and became well-intentioned.

8. They came near me in a piteous plight.. After bowing to me they eulogised me devoutly and humbly with palms joined in reverence.

9. Overwhelmed by shame they told me all the details. Dejected, they lamented before me saying the words "Save us, O save us."

10. Then I, becoming delighted, told them these words, Kṛṣṇa, you forget your fear at my behest.

11. I am the protector, always infused with love. Good will befall you. All this has happened at my will. There is no doubt in it.

12. Go to your abode along with Rādhā and your comrade. He will become a Dānava here in Bhārata, certainly.

13-14. At the proper time I shall redeem you from the curse". What I told thus Śrīkṛṣṇa and Rādhā accepted readily. Śrīkṛṣṇa the intelligent rejoiced and returned to his abode. There they engaged themselves in propitiating me and bidding their time.

15. Realising that everything is subject to my control and his will is not independent, Sudāmā became the lord of Dānavas as a result of the curse of Rādhā.

16. The virtuous demon Śaṅkhacūḍa distresses and harasses the gods always with his might. He is evil-minded to this extent.

17. He has been deluded by my deception and hence he seeks the help of evil ministers. But myself being the chastiser of the wicked you can get rid of his fear quickly".

Sanatkumāra said:—

18. O sage, by the time Śiva completed this expatiation in front of Viṣṇu and Brahmā, another event happened there. Listen to it.

19. In the meantime Kṛṣṇa came there along with Rādhā and his attendant cowherds in order to propitiate Lord Śiva.

20. Devoutly bowing to the lord, meeting Viṣṇu with respect and honoured by Brahmā with love he stood there awaiting Śiva's behest.

21. Then he bowed again to Śiva with palms joined in reverence. Realising the principle of Śiva and getting rid of his delusion Kṛṣṇa eulogised Śiva.

Lord Kṛṣṇa said:—

22. O supreme God, lord of gods, Supreme Brahman

and the goal of the good, forgive me my guilt. O supreme god, be pleased.

23. O Śiva, everything originates from you. O supreme lord, everything merges in you. O lord of all, you are everything. O supreme lord, be pleased.

24. You are the greatest splendour. You are the eternal being directly pervading everything. O lord of Gaurī, with you as leader, we are well-guided.

25-26. Considering myself above all, I sported about, under the delusion. I reaped the fruit thereof. He who went astray was cursed. O lord, my leading comrade Sudāmā the cowherd is born as a Dānava.

27. O lord of Pārvatī, uplift us. O supreme lord, be pleased. Please redeem us from the curse. Save us who have sought refuge in you.

28. After saying this, Lord Kṛṣṇa, accompanied by Rādhā, stopped. Śiva was delighted thereat, Śiva who is favourably disposed to those who seek refuge in him.

Lord Śiva said:—

29. "O Kṛṣṇa, O lord of cowherdesses leave off your fear. Be happy. O dear, all this has been brought about by me with blessing in disguise.

30. Good will befall you. Go back to your excellent abode. You shall be cautious and guarded in your position of authority.

31. Sport about as you please after realising me the greater than the greatest. Accompanied by Rādhā and your comrades carry out your task unexasperated and unfluttered.

32. In the excellent Vārāha Kalpa,[249] you shall undergo the effect of the curse along with the young damsel Rādhā and then attain your region.

33. O Kṛṣṇa, your comrade, the most beloved Sudāmā is born of a Dānava now and he harasses the universe.

34. He has become a Dānava, an enemy of the gods, named Śaṅkhacūḍa as a result of the power of Rādhā's curse. He hates and belongs to the party of Daityas.

249. Vārāhakalpa, identical with Śveta-Vārāha or Śveta Kalpa, is one of the thirty Kalpas known to the Purāṇas. Each Kalpa lasts for a specified period and is repeated in order of succession.

35. Divested of their powers, ousted and harassed by him for ever, the demoralized gods including Indra have fled to the ten directions.

36. It is for their sake that Brahmā and Viṣṇu have come here and sought refuge in me. There is no doubt in this that I will relieve them of their distress."

Sanatkumāra said:—

37. After saying this, he addressed Kṛṣṇa again eagerly after consoling Viṣṇu and Brahmā with words that quelled their agony.

Śiva said:—

38. "O Viṣṇu, O Brahmā, lovingly listen to my words. O dear ones, go quickly for the pleasure of the gods. Be fearless.

39. Go to Rudra, resident of Kailāsa,[250] who has my excellent and perfect form. He has manifested himself for the task of the gods with a separate form and features.

40. O Viṣṇu, it is for this purpose that the lord assuming my form fully and perfectly stays on the mountain Kailāsa favouring the devotees by being subservient to them.

41. There is no difference in him from us both. He shall be served by you two and all living beings—mobile and immobile as well as the gods and others always.

42. He who differentiates between us falls into hell. In this life too he will attain stress and be devoid of sons and grandsons.

Sanatkumāra said:—

43. After bowing again and again to the lord of Pārvatī who had spoken thus, Kṛṣṇa returned to his abode accompanied by Rādhā.

44. O Vyāsa, Viṣṇu and Brahmā became delighted and relieved of fear. After bowing again and again to Śiva they hastened to Vaikuṇṭha.

250. Mount Kailāsa is a part of the Himalayan range lying to the north of Mānasa-sarovara, not far off from the origin of Ghogrā (Sarayu) river. The detailed description of the mount is found in the Matsya P. Ch. 121.

45. Having come there and mentioning everything to the gods, Brahmā and Viṣṇu went to Kailāsa taking the gods with them.

46-47. On seeing lord Śiva there, the lord and husband of Pārvatī, who had taken a body for protecting the distressed, the lord of the gods possessed of attributes, they eulogised him as before with devotion and choking words. They joined their palms in reverence humbly and with drooping shoulders.

The gods said:—

48. O great god, lord of the gods, O Śiva, the lord of Pārvatī, we seek refuge in you. Please save the terrified gods.

49. Please slay Śaṅkhacūḍa the king of Asura and the destroyer of the gods. The gods have been defeated and harassed by him.

50. Like men they are roaming on the earth divested ot their powers. Their region the Devaloka has become very dreary to look at due to fear.

51. O uplifter of the distressed, O ocean of mercy, redeem the gods, from this exigency. O great lord, save Indra from fright by killing that ruler of Dānavas.

Sanatkumāra said:—

52. "On hearing the words of the gods, Śiva favourably disposed to his devotees spoke to them laughingly in the rumbling tone of the cloud.

Lord Śiva said:—

53. O Viṣṇu, O Brahmā, O Gods, return to your own abodes by all means. I shall kill Śaṅkhacūḍa along with his followers and attendants. There is no doubt about it.

Sanatkumāra said:—

54. On hearing the words of lord Śiva sweet as nectar they were excessively delighted considering the Dānava already killed.

55. After bowing to lord Śiva, Viṣṇu went to Vaikuṇṭha

and Brahmā to Satyaloka. The god and others went to their own abodes.

CHAPTER THIRTYTWO

(*The Emissary is sent*)

Sanatkumāra said :—

1. Then lord Śiva, Death to the wicked, goal of the good, decided in his mind to slay Śaṅkhacūḍa in accordance with the wishes of the gods.

2. He made his friend the lord of Gandharvas his messenger and sent him in a wonderful chariot[251] hurriedly to Śaṅkhacūḍa joyously.

3. At the bidding of lord Śiva, the emissary went to the city of the Asura which was superior to Indra's Amarāvatī and Kubera's Palace.

4. Reaching there, he saw the excellent abode of Śaṅkhacūḍa in the middle; it shone with its twelve entrance doors with gatekeepers in each.

5. Puspadanta saw the main excellent entrance. Fearlessly he informed the gatekeeper.

6. Passing beyond that door he joyously went in. It was spacious, exquisitely fine and richly decorated.

7. Going in he saw Śaṅkhacūḍa, the ruler of Dānavas, seated on a gem-set throne in the midst of heroic warriors.

8. He was surrounded by leading Dānavas and served by three crores of attendants and guarded by another hundred crores of well armed soldiers moving to and fro.

9. Seeing him, Puṣpadanta was struck with wonder. He gave the message of war as conveyed by Śiva.

Puṣpadanta said:—

10. O great king, O lord, I am the Emissary of Śiva

251. Citraratha (lit. of wonderful chariot) seems to be an appellation of Puṣpadanta. Or Citraratha, lord of Gandharvas, may have assumed the name Puṣpadanta as an emissary.

named Puṣpadanta. Please listen to what is mentioned by Śiva himself. I am telling you the same.

Śiva said:—

11. Now, give back their kingdom to the gods and their authority. If not, fight with me, the greatest of the good warriors.

12. The gods have sought refuge in me, the lord of the gods and the benefactor of the good. I the infuriated will certainly slay you.

13. I am Śiva, the destroyer. I have granted protection to all the gods. I am the holder of the chastising rod for the wicked and favourably disposed to those who seek refuge in me.

14. O lord of Dānavas, consider and let me know one of the two alternatives specifically, whether you will return the kingdom or fight.

Puṣpadanta said:

15. O lord of Dānavas, what has been stated by Śiva has been conveyed to you. Śiva's words have never gone in vain.

16. I wish to return to my lord Śiva immediately. After going back what shall I tell Śiva, you clearly let me know.

Sanatkumāra said:—

17. On hearing these words of Puṣpadanta who was the emissary of lord Śiva, the king laughed, then spoke to him.

Śaṅkhacūḍa said:—

18. I will never return the kingdom to the god. The earth shall be enjoyed by heroic warriors. O Śiva, I shall fight with you who are a partisan of the gods.

19. The hero who allows another to supercede him is the basest in the world. Hence O Śiva I shall certainly march towards you just now.

20. I reach there in the morning in the course of my victorious campaign. O messenger, go and tell all this to Śiva.

Sanatkumāra said:—

21. On hearing these words of Śaṅkhacūḍa, the emissary of Śiva laughed aloud and then spoke haughtily to the lord of the Asuras.

Puṣpadanta said:—

22. O Great king, you cannot face the Gaṇas of Śiva. Then how can you face lord Śiva himself?

23. So return their positions of authority to the gods entirely. Move immediately to Pātāla if you wish to live.

24. O excellent Dānava, do not regard Śiva an ordinary deity. He is indeed the great soul, the lord of the lord of all.

25. Indra and other gods abide by his commands. The Siddhas, the patriarchs, the sages and the serpent lords all follow suit.

26. He is the overlord of Viṣṇu and Brahmā. He is both possessed and devoid of attributes. By a mere twitch of his knitted eyebrow everything is dissolved.

27. Śiva is the perfect form of gods, the cause of the annihilation of the worlds, the goal of the good, the destroyer of the wicked. He is free from aberrations. He is greater than the greatest.

28. He is the overlord of Brahmā. He is lord Śiva even into Viṣṇu.. O excellent Dānava, his behest should never be slighted.

29. Of what avail is an unnecessary digression, O great king. Ponder deeply. Know him to be great lord, the great Brahman, the knowledge-formed.

30. Return their kingdoms to the gods as well as their positions of authority. O dear, thus you will fare well. Otherwise, terror will strike you.

Sanatkumāra said:—

31. On hearing this, the valorous king of the Dānavas, deluded by his fate spoke to the emissary of Śiva thus.

Śaṅkhacūḍa said:—

32. I shall neither give up kingdom nor the positions

of authority, without a fight with him. This is certain. I tell you the truth.

33. The entire universe whether mobile or immobile is subject to the vagaries of time. Everything originates in time and everything merges into time.

34. Go and tell Śiva exactly what I have said to you. Let him do what is proper. Do not talk much.

Sanatkumāra said:—

35. O good sage, Puṣpadanta the emissary of Śiva when thus addressed by the Asura returned to lord Śiva and told him everything duly.

CHAPTER THIRTYTHREE

(*March of The Victorious Lord Śiva*)

Sanatkumāra said:—

1. On hearing those words of the emissary, the infuriated emperor of the gods, Śiva spoke to Vīrabhadra and other Gaṇas.

Śiva said.

2-3. "O Vīrabhadra, O Nandin, O eight Bhairavas,* the frontier guards,[252] let the Gaṇas start along with my sons. at my bidding. Let those strong ones be ready and fully equipped with weapons. Let Bhadrakālī start with her army for the war. I start just now for slaying Śaṅkhacūḍa".

Sanatkumāra said:—

4. Having ordered thus, lord Śiva started along with his army. His delighted heroic Gaṇas followed him.

5. In the meantime Kārttikeya and Gaṇeśa, the overall generals of the army, came near Śiva joyously, fully equipped with weapons and ready for war.

*See Note 255 P. 948.

252. Kṣetrapālas are tutelary deities whose number is given as fortynine.

6-9. The leading chiefs of the Gaṇas were Vīrabhadra, Nandin, Mahākāla, Subhadraka, Viśālākṣa, Bāṇa, Piṅgalākṣa, Vikampana, Virūpa, Vikṛti, Maṇibhadra, Bāṣkala, Kapila, Dīrghadaṁṣṭra, Vikara, Tāmralocana, Kālaṅkara, Balībhadra, Kālajihva, Kuṭīcara, Balonmatta, Raṇaślāghya, Durjaya, Durgama and others. I shall enumerate the number of Gaṇas they had. Listen attentively.

10. Śaṅkhakarṇa the suppressor of enemies went, accompanied by a crore Gaṇas; Kekarākṣa went with ten crores and Vikṛta with eight crores.

11. Viśākha with sixty four crores; Pāriyātrika with nine crores; Sarvāntaka with six crores and the glorious Vikṛtānana too with six crores.

12. The chief of Gaṇas, Jālaka went with twelve crores; the glorious Samada seven and Dundubha with eight crores.

13. Karālākṣa went with five crores; the excellent Sandāraka with six crores; Kunduka and Kuṇḍaka each went with crores of Gaṇas.

14. The leader of Gaṇas, the most excellent of all, Viṣṭambha, went with eight crores Pippala and Sannāda went with a thousand crores.

15. Āveśana went with eight crores; Candratāpana with eight crores; Mahākeśa the chief of Gaṇas with a thousand crores.

16. The heroic Kuṇḍin and the auspicious Parvataka went with twelve crores each; Kāla, Kālaka and Mahākāla with a hundred crores each.

17. Agnika went with a hundred crores, Agnimukha with a crore, Āditya and Ghanāvaha with half a crore.

18. Sannāha and Kumuda went with a hundred crores each; Amogha, Kokila and Sumantraka with a hundred crores each.

19. Kākapāda and Santānaka went with sixty crores each: Mahābala with nine crores and Madhu Piṅgala with five crores.

20. Nīla, Deveśa and Pūrṇabhadra each went with ninety crores; the powerful Caturvaktra with seven crores.

21. With thousands, hundreds and twenties of crores many heroes came there to take part in that festival of War.

22. Vīrabhadra came there with a thousand crores of Bhūtas, three crores of Pramathas and sixtyfour crores of Lomajas.

23. Kāṣṭhārūḍha with sixty four crores and Sukeśa and Vṛṣabha too similarly. The honourable Virūpākṣa and Sanātana went with sixtyfour crores.

24-26. Tālaketu, Ṣaḍāsya, the valorous Pañcāsya, Samvartaka, Caitra, Laṅkulīśa Svayamprabhu, Lokāntaka, Dīptātman, lord Daityāntaka, lord Bhṛṅgīriṭi, the glorious Devadevapriya, Aśani, Bhānuka, Kaṅkāla, Kālaka, Kāla, Nandin and Sarvāntaka each went with sixtyfour crores.

27. These and other leading Gaṇas, powerful and innumerable started lovingly to fight fearlessly with Śaṅkhacūḍa.

28. All of them had thousand arms, matted hair for their crowns, and crescent moon for embellishment. They had blue necks and three eyes.

29. They wore Rudrākṣas as ornaments. They had smeared their bodies with fine Bhasma. They were decorated with necklaces, earrings, bracelets, coronets and other ornaments.

30. They resembled Brahmā, Indra and Viṣṇu. They had the attributes of Aṇimā[253] etc. They were as refulgent as a crore suns. They were efficient in warfare.

31. O sage, some of them were the residents of the earth; some of the Pātāla, some of the sky and some of the seven heavens.[254]

32. O celestial sage, why shall I dilate ? All the Śivagaṇas, residents of different regions went to fight with the Dānavas.

33-35. The eight Bhairavas[255] the terrible eleven Rudras,[256]

253. For eight Siddhis—Animā etc. see Note 203 P. 235.

254. The concept of seven heavens is not peculiar to the Purāṇas alone, it is found in the S mitic and Christian sacred lore as well.

255. Bhairava is a fierce form of Śiva. The Purāṇas mention eight Bhairavas : viz महासंहार, असिताङ्ग, रुरु, काल, क्रोध, ताम्रचूड or कपाल, चन्द्रचूड and रुद्र. Sometimes other names are given : विद्याराज, कामराज, नागराज, स्वच्छन्द, लम्बित, देव, उग्र and विघ्न।

256. Eleven Rudras are regarded as inferior manifestations of Śiva. They are variously named in different Purāṇas. See Note 127 P. 138.

the eight Vasus,[257] the twelve Ādityas,[258] Indra, the fire god, the moon, Viśvakarman, the Aśvins, Kubera, Yama, Nirṛti, Nalakūbara, Vāyu, Varuṇa, Budha, Maṅgala, the other planets and the valorous Kāmadeva went with lord Śiva.

36-37. Ugradaṇḍa, Ugradaṁṣṭra, Koraṭa and Koṭabha too went. The great goddess Bhadrakāli herself with hundred arms was seated in an aerial chariot studded with gems. She was wearing a red cloth and a red garland. She had smeared red unguents over her body.

38. She was dancing, laughing and singing in a sweet voice joyously. She was offering protection to her own people and striking terror to the enemies.

39-44. Her tongue was a yojana long and terrible. She bore conch, discus, mace, lotus, sword, leather shield, bows, arrows, skull of circular shape, a yojana in width and majestic in appearance, a trident that touched the sky, a yojana long spear, iron club, threshing rod, thunderbolt, sword, a thick shield, the miraculous weapons of Viṣṇu, Varuṇa, Vāyu, Nārāyaṇa, Gandharva, Brahmā, Garuḍa, Parjanya, Paśupati, Parvata, and Maheśvara, Nāgapāśa, Jṛmbhaṇāstra, the Mahāvīra, the Saura, the Kālakāla and the Mahānala weapons, the staff of Yama, the Sammohana, the divine weapon called Samartha. Many such and other divine weapons she held in her hands.

45. She came and stood there with three crores of Yoginīs and three crores of terrible Ḍākinīs.

46. Bhūtas, Pretas, Piśācas, Kūṣmāṇḍas, Brahmarākṣasas, Vetālas, Yakṣas, Kinnaras and Rākṣasas too came there.

47. Skanda was surrounded by these all. He bowed to Śiva and at his bidding stayed near his father to assist him.

48. The fearless, fierce Śiva gathered his armies and went to fight Śaṅkhacūḍa.

257. Vasus, a class of deities, are rather Vedic personifications of natural phenomena. They are eight in number आप् (Water) ध्रुव (pole-star), सोम (moon), धरा (earth), अनिल (wind), अनल (fire), प्रभास (dawn) and प्रत्यूष light. See ŚP, VS 24. 101 and Note 163 P. 162.

258. Ādityas are twelve in number : मित्र, अर्यमन् भग, वरुण दक्ष etc. They are variously named in the Purāṇas.

49. The great god stationed himself at the foot of a beautiful Banyan tree on the banks of the river Candrabhāgā,[259] for the emancipation of the gods.

CHAPTER THIRTYFOUR

(*The March of Śaṅkhacūḍa*)

Vyāsa said:—

1. O dear son of Brahmā, O sage of great intellect, live long for many years. You have narrated the great story of the mooncrested lord.

2. When Śiva's emissary had departed, what did the valorous Dānava, Śaṅkhacūḍa do ? Please mention that in detail.

Sanatkumāra said :—

3. When the messenger returned, the valorous Śaṅkhacūḍa went in and told his wife Tulasī all the details.

Śaṅkhacūḍa said:—

4. O dear lady, infuriated by the words of Śiva's messenger I have prepared for a war. Hence I am going to fight. You carry out my directions.

Sanatkumāra said:—

5. After saying this and slighting Śiva, that demon professing to be wise advised his wife in various ways and sported with her with delight.

6. Throughout that night, the couple indulged in sexual dalliance. Uttering coaxing and cajoling words, practising various erotic arts, they immersed themselves in the ocean of happiness.

259. Candrabhāgā, (Mod. Chenab, Ptolemy's Sandabaga) rises from the foot of the Himalayas in two rivulets Chandrā and Bhāgā which join at Tandi. The joint stream is known as Chandrabhāgā. See Note 237 P. 235.

7. He got up in the Brāhma Muhūrta,[260] and finished his daily routine in the morning. He then performed the offering of charitable gifts.

8-9. He crowned his son as the lord of Dānavas. He entrusted his wife, his kingdom and his riches to the care of his son. When his wife cried and dissuaded him from going to the war he consoled her by various words of appeasement.

10. He called his general and ordered him to be ready for the war.

Śaṅkhacūḍa said:—

11. O general, let the heroic warriors start for the war. Let them be ready for action; they have been trained well for the war.

12. Let the heroic Dānavas and Daityas, the armies of the powerful Kaṅkas of eightysix divisions well-equipped in arms set out fearlessly.

13. Let the fifty families of Asuras, having the heroism and prowess of a crore set out to fight with Śiva, the partisan of the gods.

14. At my bidding, let the hundred armed families of Dhaumras speedily set out to fight with Śiva.

15. At my behest, let the Kālakeyas Mauryas, Dauhṛdas and the Kālakas set out ready for the fight with Śiva.

Sanatkumāra said:—

16. After ordering thus, the powerful lord of Asuras and the Emperor of the Dānavas set out surrounded by thousands of warriors and great armies.

17. His general was an expert in the science and technique of warfare. He was the best of charioteers a great hero and skilled in warfare.

18. He had three hundred thousand Akṣauhiṇī[261] armies. He performed the rites of auspicious beginning and came out of the camp. He was terrible to the watching heroes.

260. See Note 191 P. 218.

261. A single Akṣauhiṇī consists of 21, 870 elephants, 21870 chariots, 65610 horses and 109, 350 foot.

19. Mounting on an aerial chariot of exquisite build and inlaid with gems, and making obeisance to the elders and preceptors he set out for the battle.

20-21. In the holy land of Bhārata, to the east of the western ocean and to the west of Malaya[262] mountain, on the banks of river Puṣpabhadrā,[263] there is a hermitage of Kapila[264] with an auspicious holy Banyan tree. It is called Siddhāśrama.[265] It is the place where holy men achieve the result of their action.

22. It is to the north of Śrīśaila[266] and to the south of Gandhamādana.[267] It is five Yojanas in width and a hundred times as much in length.

23. The river Puṣpabhadrā is very beautiful and full of transparent water. It confers merits on everyone in Bhārata, like the river Sarasvatī.

24. It starts from Himālaya, has its confluence with Sarasvatī. It is the beloved of the briny sea and blessess people with good fortune.

25. It enters the western ocean where Gomanta[268] is on its left. Śaṅkhacūḍa went there and saw the army of Śiva.

262. Malaya (Dravidian : malai) is identical with the Travancore hills and the southernmost part of the Western Ghats.

263. It has not been possible to identify this river. According to the present context, Puṣpabhadrā issues from the Himalayas, rises along with the Sarasvatī and falls into the Western ocean. (Cp Verses 24-25 of this ch.)

264. Kapila was an ancient sage who destroyed a hundred thousand sons of King Sagara.

265. The wide tract of land, the Scene of Kapila's hermitage, lies to the East of the Western ocean to the West of Travancore hills to the north of Śrīśaila hills and to the south of Gandhamādana mountain.

266. It is one of the most sacred and beautiful hills of the South overhanging the river kṛṣṇā.

267. The location of Gandhamādana is highly controversial See Note 309 P. 405 and Note 66 P. 623. Most probably this is the Himālayan Gandhamādana that is referred to here.

268. It is identical with Goa.

CHAPTER THIRTYFIVE

(The conversation between Śiva and the emissary of Śaṅkhacūḍa)

Sanatkumāra said:—

1. Stationing himself there, the lord of Dānavas sent a leading Dānava of great knowledge as his emissary to Śiva.

2. The emissary went there and saw the moon-crested lord Śiva, of the refulgence of a crore suns, seated at the root of the Banyan tree.

3. He saw him sitting in a yogic pose, showing the mystic gesture with his eyes, with a smiling face and body as pure as crystal and blazing with transcendent splendour.

4-7. Śiva held the trident and the iron club. He was clad in the hide of the tiger. The emissary saw the three-eyed lord of Pārvatī, the enlivener of the life of the devotees, the quiet Śiva, the dispenser of the fruits of penance, the creator of riches, quick in being propitiated, eager to bless the devotees and beaming with pleasure in his face. He saw the lord of the universe, the seed of the universe, identical with the universe and of universal form, born of all, lord of all, creator of all, the cause of the annihilation of the universe, the cause of causes, the one who enables devotees to cross the ocean of hell, the bestower of knowledge, the seed of knowledge, knowlege-bliss and eternal.

8. On seeing him, the messenger, the leader of Dānavas, descended from his chariot and bowed to him as well as to Kumāra.

9. He saw Bhadrakālī to his left and Kārttikeya standing before him. Kālī, Kārttikeya and Śiva offered him the conventional benediction.

10. This emissary of Śaṅkhacūḍa, had full knowledge of the sacred texts. He joined his palms in reverence and bowing to him spoke the auspicious words.

The Emissary said :—

11. "O lord, I am the emissary of Śaṅkhacūḍa and have come to you. What is it that you desire? Please tell me."

Sanatkumāra said:—

12. On hearing these words of Śaṅkhacūḍa, lord Śiva became delighted and spoke.

Lord Śiva said:—

13. O messenger of great intellect, listen to my words conducive to happiness. After pondering over this, without disputation, this shall be mentioned to him.

14. Brahmā is the creator of the worlds and father of Dharma. He knows virtue. Marīci is his son. Kaśyapa is Marīci's son.

15. Dakṣa gave him his thirteen daughters, with pleasure. Among them the chaste lady Danu increased his fortune to a great extent.

16. Danu gave birth to four sons called Dānavas. They were vigorous and powerful. Vipracitti of great strength and valour was one of them.

17. His son, the virtuous Dambha of great intellect was the ruler of Dānavas. You are his excellent son, a pious soul, and the lord of Dānavas.

18. In previous birth you were a cowherd and an attendant of Kṛṣṇa. Among the cowherds you were virtuous. As a result of Rādhā's curse, you are born as Dānava and have become the king of Dānavas.

19. You are casually born as a Dānava. You are really no Dānava. Realising your previous birth you leave off your inimical attitude to the gods.

20. Don't be malicious towards them. You can enjoy your kingdom zealously. Do not try to expand your kingdom nor spoil it.

21. O Dānava, return their kingdom to the gods. Maintain my affection. Stay in your kingdom happily. Let the gods stay in their region.

22. Do not offend people. Don't be malicious to the gods. The descendants of Kaśyapa are noble and indulge in pure activities.

23. Whatever sin is there in the world, even including that of slaughter of a brahmin, does not merit even a sixteenth part of the sin accruing from the offence towards kinsmen.

Sanatkumāra said:—

24. These and many such words of advice, auspiciously based on injunctions of Śruti and Smṛti, Śiva said to him enlightening him in an excellent manner.

25. The emissary who had been well instructed by Śaṅkhacūḍa who knew his duties well but who had been deluded by destiny spoke these words humbly.

The messenger said:—

26. O lord, what has been narrated by you is true. It cannot be otherwise. But let my submission based on certain factual elements be heard.

27. O lord Śiva, verily a great sin has been cited as the result of offence to kinsmen by you now. But does it concern only Asuras and not the gods? Please tell me.

28. If it applies to all alike, I shall consider it and let you know. Please tell me your decision at the outset and clear my doubts.

29. O lord Śiva, why did the discus-bearing lord Viṣṇu sever the heads of Madhu and Kaiṭabha[269] the excellent Daityas in the ocean of dissolution ?

30. Your Majesty too, O Śiva, is famous as a partisan of the gods. Why did you fight with the Tripuras[270] and reduce them to ashes ?

31. After divesting him of every thing why was Bali packed off to Sutala and other regions[271] ? Did Viṣṇu go to his threshold as his uplifter ?

32. Why was Hiraṇyākṣa[272] harassed by the gods along with his brother ? Why were Śumbha[273] and other Asuras subjected to fall by the gods ?

269. The Asuras Madhu and Kaiṭabha born of the ears of Viṣṇu in the ocean at the end of a kalpa rushed against Brahmā who appealed for help to Viṣṇu. Viṣṇu extended his arms, seized the Asuras and slew them with his might

270. For the destruction of Tripuras see ŚP RS. V. Ch. 10

271. It refers to he legend of Viṣṇu who assuming the form of a dwarf craved from Bali the boon of three steps of ground and then stepping over heaven and earth in two strides left the nether region for Bali's abode.

272. Hiraṇyākṣa and Hiraṇyakaśipu were slain by Viṣṇu in his Boar and Man-lion incarnations respectively.

273. Śumbha, Niśumbha and other Asuras were killed by the Goddess Durgā at the instance of the gods.

33. Formerly when the ocean was churned, the nectar was drunk off by the gods.[274] All the strain and stress was ours but the gods reaped the fruit of our endeavour.

34. The entire universe is but an object of sport of Kāla the supreme soul. Whomsoever and whensoever he pleases to bestow the riches he atttains them.

35. The enmity of the gods and the Dānavas is perpetual and sparked off due to some reason or other. By turns, subject to the whims of Kāla they enjoy victory or defeat.

36. Interference on your part in the dispute between the two is futile. This does not behove you, the lord who are equally in touch with both.

37. Your rivalry to us is excessively shameful since you are lord unto the gods as well as to the Asuras. You are the supreme soul.

38. In the event of your victory your fame is not enhanced. In the event of your defeat you suffer a great loss. Let this disadvantage be pondered over.

Sanatkumāra said:—

39. On hearing these words, the three-eyed lord laughed and spoke sweetly to the leading Dānava what seemed proper:

Lord Śiva said:—

40. We are subservient to our devotees. We are never independent. We carry out their tasks at their wish. We are not the partisans of any one in particular.

41. Formerly the fight of Viṣṇu with the excellent Daityas Madhu and Kaiṭabha in the ocean of dissolution was due to the prior request of Brahmā.

42. For the sake of Prahlāda, at the request of gods, Hiraṇyakaśipu was slain by him acting in the interest of his devotees.

43. Formerly I fought with the Tripuras and reduced

274. It refers to the churning of the nectar from the ocean by the joint endeavour of the gods and Asuras. The gods drank the nectar while the Asuras were deceived by Viṣṇu and deprived of their legitimate right to drink the same.

them to ashes, only at the request of the gods. It is well known.

44. Formerly Pārvatī, the Mother of all, the goddess of all, fought with Śumbha and others and killed them only at the request of the gods.

45. Even today, the gods have sought refuge in Brahmā. And he along with the gods and the lord Viṣṇu has sought refuge in me.

46. O Emissary, paying heed to the request of Viṣṇu, Brahmā and others, I, though lord of all, have come here in the battle of the gods.

47. Really you are the foremost of the comrades of Kṛṣṇa, the great soul. Those Daityas who had been formerly killed are not on a par with you.

48. What is there excessively shameful in my fight with you, O king ? I the lord have been urged humbly to carry out the task of the gods.

49. Go to Śaṅkhacūḍa and tell him what I have said. Let him do what is proper. I shall carry out the taşk of the gods.

Sanatkumāra said:—

50. On saying this, Śiva the great god, stopped. The emissary stood up and returned to Śaṅkhacūḍa.

CHAPTER THIRTYSIX

(*Mutual fight*)

Sanatkumāra said:—

1. The emissary returned and mentioned the words of Śiva, in detail and truthfully. He conveyed his decision as it was.

2. On hearing that, the valorous Dānava Śaṅkhacūḍa accepted lovingly the alternative of a fight.

3. Hurriedly he got into his vehicle along with his ministers. He commanded his army against Śiva.

4. Śiva too hastened to urge his army and the gods. The lord of all was ready himself with his sport.

5. The musical instruments formally announced the beginning of war. There was a great tumult along with the shouts of the heroes.

6. O sage, the mutual fight between the gods and the Dānavas ensued. Both the hosts of the gods and the Dānavas fought righteously.

7. Mahendra fought with Vṛṣaparvan. Bhāskara fought with Vipracitti.

8. Viṣṇu fought a great battle with Dambha, Kāla with the Asura Kāla and the firegod fought with Gokarṇa.

9. Kubera fought with Kālakeya and Viśvakarman with Maya. Mṛtyu fought with Bhayaṁkara and Yama with Saṁhāra.

10. Varuṇa fought with Kālambika, the wind god with Cañcala. Mercury with Ghaṭapṛṣṭha and Śanaiścara with Raktākṣa.

11. Jayanta fought with Ratnasāra; the Vasus with the groups of Varcas's; the Aśvins with the two Dīptimants and Nalakūbara with Dhūmbra.

12. Dharma fought with Dhurandhara; Maṅgala with Gaṇakākṣa; Vaiśvana with Śobhākara and Manmatha with Pipiṭa.

13-14. The twelve sun gods fought with the Asuras—Gokāmukha, Cūrṇa, Khaḍga, Dhūmra, Samhala, the valorous Viśva and Palāśa. The other gods assisting Śiva fought righteously with the other Asuras.

15. The eleven Mahārudras[275] fought with the eleven terrible Asuras of great power and valour.

16. Mahāmaṇi fought with Ugracaṇḍa and others. The god Moon fought with Rāhu and Jīva fought with Śukra.

17. Nandīśvara and the rest fought with leading Dānavas in the great battle. This is not being explained separately.

18. O sage, then Śiva stayed at the foot of the

275. For eleven Rudras, see Note 127. P 138; 256 P 948.

Banyan tree along with Kālī and his son. The hosts of the two armies fought continuously against each other.

19. Decorated with gemset ornaments, Śaṅkhcūda sat on his gemset throne of great beauty attended upon by a crore Dānavas.

20. Then ensued a great war in which both gods and Asuras were crushed. In that great war many divine and miraculous weapons were hurled.

21-22. Maces, long and short swords, Paṭṭiśas, Bhuśuṇḍis, Mudgaras (different kinds of iron clubs), javelins, spears, Parighas, Śaktis, axes, arrows, Tomaras, Śataghnīs, and other weapons shone in the hands of the heroes.

23. Using these weapons, the heroes severed the heads of each other. It was a jubilant occasion for the roaring heroes of the armies.

24. Elephants, horses, chariots and foot soldiers along with their drivers and riders were hit and split up.

25. The arms, thighs, hands, hips, ears and feet were cut off. The banners, arrows, swords, coats of mail and excellent ornaments were slit and split.

26. The earth shone with heads divested of coronets but with earrings retained, strewn about and with thighs resembling trunks of elephants broken off during the tussle.

27. Severed arms with the ornaments and weapons still retained and other limbs too were lying scattered about like honeycombs.

28. The soldiers running in the battle field saw several headless bodies that jumped with many weapons lifted in their hands.

29. With different kinds of miraculous and ordinary weapons and missiles, the heroes of great strength and valour fought one another shouting and leaping.

30. Some heroes killed the soldiers with their arrows fitted with goden tips and roared like water-laden rumbling clouds.

31. One hero fully encompassed another hero as well as his chariot and charioteer, by discharging heaps of arrows like the rainy season covering up the sun under the clouds.

32. Fighters of duel rushed against one another, challenging, thrusting and diving in at the vulnerable points.

33. Everywhere groups of heroes were seen in that terrible war roaring like lions with various weapons displayed in their hands.

34. The heroes in their joy shouted and leapt blowing on their conches of loud sound severally.

35. Thus for a long time the great combat between the gods and Dānavas continued, terrible and tumultuous but delightful to the heroes.

36. Such was the divine sport of the great lord Śiva, the great soul. Everyone including the gods, Asuras and human beings was deluded by it.

CHAPTER THIRTYSEVEN

(*Śaṅkhacūḍa fights with the full contingent of his army*)

Sanatkumāra said:—

1. Then the gods were defeated by the Dānavas. Their bodies were wounded by weapons and missiles. Terrified, they took to flight.

2. Returning to Śiva, the lord of the universe, they sought refuge in him. In agitated words they cried "O Lord of all, save, O save us."

3. On seeing the defeat of the gods and others and on hearing their cries of fear, Śiva was greatly infuriated.

4. He glanced at the gods sympathetically and assured them of his protection. With his brilliance he enhanced the strength of his Gaṇas.

5. Commanded by Śiva, the great hero Kārttikeya, son of Śiva fought fearlessly with the hosts of Dānavas in the battle.

6. Shouting angrily and roaring like a hero, the lord, the slayer of Tāraka killed a hundred Akṣauhiṇīs[276] in the battle.

7. Clipping off their heads, Kālī with eyes like a red lotus, drank off the blood and devoured the flesh rapidly.

276. For Akṣauhiṇī see Note 261 P. 951.

8. She fought in diverse ways terrifying both the gods and the Dānavas. She drank the blood of the Dānavas all round.

9. Seizing ten million elephants and an equal number of men with a single hand she playfully thrust them into her mouth.

10. Many thousands of headless bodies danced in the battle field. There was a great tumult that terrified the cowards.

11. Again Kārttikeya became furiously angry and showered volleys of arrows. He struck crores of leaders of the Asuras within a trice.

12. The Dānavas wounded in their bodies by the numerous arrows of Kārttikeya fled in fright. Those who remained were killed.

13. Vṛṣaparvan, Vipracitti, Daṇḍa, and Vikampana fought with Kārttikeya by turns.

14. Mahāmārī also fought. She was never routed. All of them afflicted by Kārttikeya's spear were wounded.

15. O sage, Mahāmārī and Skanda won the battle. Big wardrums were sounded in the heaven. Showers of flowers fell down.

16-17. On seeing the wonderfully terrible fight of Kārttikeya that caused wastage in the rank and file of the Dānavas like natural disasters, as well as the harassment and havoc wrought by Mahāmārī, Śaṅkhacūḍa became furious and himself got ready for the battle.

18-19. He got into his excellent aerial chariot that contained different weapons and missiles, that was set in diamond and that encouraged and emboldened the heroes. Śaṅkhacūḍa drew the string of the bow upto his ear and discharged volleys of arrows from his seat in the middle of the chariot. He was accompanied by many heroes.

20. His volley of arrows was terrifying. It could not be withstood. A terrible darkness spread in the battlefield.

21. The gods Nandīśvara and others fled. Only Kārttikeya stayed behind in the battle field.

22. The king of Dānavas showered mountains, serpents, pythons and trees so terrifyingly that it could not be withstood.

23. Oppressed by that shower Kārttikeya, the son of Śiva, looked like the sun enveloped by thick sheets of frost.

24. He exhibited many types of illusions in the manner indicated by Maya. O excellent sage, none of the gods or Gaṇas understood it.

25. At the same time, the powerful Śaṅkhacūḍa of great illusion split his bow with a divine arrow.

26. He split his divine chariot and the horses pulling it. With a divine missile he shattered the peacock too.

27. The Dānava hurled his spear as refulgent as the sun fatally on his chest whereat he fell unconscious by the force of the blow.

28. Regaining consciousness, Kārttikeya the destroyer of heroic enemies, mounted his vehicle of sturdy build, set with gems.

29. Remembering the feat of lord Śiva accompanied by Pārvatī, and taking up weapons and missiles, the six-faced deity fought terrifically.

30. With his divine missiles, the son of Śiva split the serpents, mountains, trees and rocks, everything furiously.

31. He prevented a conflagration by the missile of cloud. He split the chariot and the bow of Śaṅkhacūda playfully.

32. He split his armour, coronet and the vehicles. He roared like a hero and shouted again and again.

33. He hurled his spear refulgent like the sun at the chest of the lord of Dānavas. At the blow he fell unconscious.

34. That powerful Asura got rid of the affliction in a Muhūrta and regained consciousness. With a leonine vigour he got up and roared.

35. He bit Kārttikeya of great strength with his spear. Not making that spear, a gift of Brahmā, futile, Kārttikeya fell on the ground.

36. Taking him on her lap Kālī brought him near Śiva. By his divine sport and perfect wisdom Śiva enlivened him.

37. Śiva gave him infinite strength. As a result of that the valorous Kārttikeya stood up and felt inclined to go to the battlefield.

38. In the meantime the heroic Vīrabhadra of great strength fought with the powerful Śaṅkhacūḍa in the battle.

39. Whatever arrows were discharged by the Dānava in the battle were split playfully by Vīrabhadra by means of his own arrows.

40. The lord of Dānavas discharged hundreds of divine missiles. The valorous Vīrabhadra split all of them by means of his arrows.

41. The valorous Śaṅkhacūḍa became infuriated and hit him on the grounds.

42. Regaining consciouness in a trice the leader of the Gaṇas, Vīrabhadra caught hold of his bow again.

43. In the meantime Kālī went to the battle ground again at the request of Kārttikeya to devour the Dānavas and to protect her own people.

44. Nandīśvara and other heroes, the gods, Gandharvas, Yakṣas, Rākṣasas and serpents followed her.

45. Drum-bearers and wine-carriers[277] accompanied them in hundreds. Heroic warriors on either side were active again.

CHAPTER THIRTYEIGHT

(*Kālī fights*)

Sanatkumāra said:—

1. Going to the battle ground, the goddess Kālī roared like a lion. On hearing that the Dānavas fainted.

2. She laughed boisterously again and again boding ill to the Asuras. She drank the distilled grapewine and danced on the battle ground.

3. The manifestations of Durgā viz—Ugradaṁṣṭrā (one with fierce fangs) Ugradaṇḍā (one with fierce baton) and Kotavī (the naked) danced on the battle ground and drank wine.

277. The expression 'Maphuvāhaka' indicates that the custom of drinking wine among the fighting ranks in the battlefield prevailed even in ancient days.

4. There was great tumult on the side of the Gaṇas and the gods. All the gods and the Gaṇas roared and rejoiced.

5. On seeing Kālī, Śaṅkhacūḍa hastened to the battle ground. The Dānavas were frightened but the king Śaṅkhacūḍa assured them of protection.

6. Kālī hurled fire as fierce as the flame of dissolution which the king put out sportively by means of Vaiṣṇava missiles.

7. Immediately the goddess hurled the Nārāyaṇa missile at him. The missile developed its power on seeing the Dānava Śaṅkhacūḍa.

8. On realising it as fierce as the flame of fire of dissolution, the Dānava Śaṅkhacūḍa fell flat on the ground and bowed again and again.

9. On seeing the Dānava humbled the missile turned away. Then the goddess hurled the Brahmā missile with due invocation through the mantra.[278]

10. On seeing the missile blazing he bowed and fell on the ground. The leader of the Dānavas thus prevented the Brahmā missile from attacking him.

11. Then the infuriated leader of the Dānavas drew the bow violently and discharged divine missiles at the goddess with due invocation through the mantras.

12. Opening the mouth very wide she swallowed the missiles and roared with a boisterous laugh. The Dānavas were terrified.

13. He then hurled a Śakti, a hundred Yojanas long at Kālī. By means of divine missiles she broke it into a hundred pieces.

14. He hurled the Vaiṣṇava missile on Kālī. She blocked it with the Māheśvara missile.

15. Thus the mutual combat went on for a long time. All the gods and Dānavas stood as mere onlookers.

16. Then the infuriated goddess Kālī, as fierce as the god of death on the battleground, took up angrily the Pāśupata arrow sanctified by mantras.

278. The reference to the missiles of unfailing effect discharged with the magic formulae indicates the heights that military science had attained in that age.

17. In order to prevent it from being hurled, an unembodied celestial voice said—"O goddess, do not hurl this missile angrily at Śaṇkhacūḍa."

18. "O Caṇḍikā, death of this Dānava will not take place even through the never failing Pāśupata missile. Think of some other means for slaying this warrior Śaṅkhacūḍa."

19. On hearing this, Bhadrakālī did not hurl the missile. Sportively she devoured ten million Dānavas as if in hunger.

20. The terrible goddess rushed at Śaṅkhacūḍa to devour him. The Dānava prevented her by means of the divine missile of Rudra.

21. Then the infuriated leader of the Dānavas hurled a sword, as fierce as the summer sun, with sharp and terrific edge.

22. On seeing the blazing sword approaching, Kālī furiously opened her mouth and swallowed it even as Śaṅkhacūḍa stood watching.

23. The lord of Dānavas hurled many divine missiles but before they reached her she broke them into hundreds of pieces.

24. Again the great goddess rushed at him in order to devour him. But that glorious Dānava, leader of all Siddhas vanished from sight.

25. Thus unable to see him, Kālī who rushed with great velocity crushed his chariot and killed the charioteer with her fist.

26. Then Śaṅkhacūḍa, an expert in using deception returned quickly and forcefully hurled the wheel blazing like the flame of fire of dissolution, at Bhadrakālī.

27. The goddess sportively caught hold of the wheel with her left hand and immediately swallowed it.

28. The goddess then hit him with her fist forcefully and angrily. The king of Dānavas whirled round and fainted for a short while.

29. Immediately the Dānava regained consciousness and got up valorously. He did not fight her with his arms by the thought that she was a woman like his mother.

30. The goddess seized the Dānava, whirled him again and again and tossed him up with great anger and velocity.

31. The valorous Śaṅkhacūḍa fell down after being tossed up very high. He got up and bowed down to Bhadrakālī.

32. Highly delighted thereafter, he got into a beautiful aerial chariot of exquisite workmanship set with gems and did not lose the balance of his mind in the battlefield.

33. Hungrily Kālī drank the blood of the Dānavas. In the meantime an unembodied celestial voice said:

34. O goddess, a hundred thousand haughty leading Dānavas have been left out in the battle still roaring. Devour them quickly.

35. Do not think of slaying the king of Dānavas. O goddess, Śaṅkhacūḍa cannot be killed by you. It is certain.

36-37. On hearing these words from the firmament, Bhadrakālī drank the blood and devoured the flesh of many Dānavas and went near Śiva. She then narrated to him the events of the war in the proper order.

CHAPTER THIRTYNINE

(*The annihilation of the army of Śaṅkhacūḍa*)

Vyāsa said:—

1. O intelligent one, on hearing the narrative of Kālī what did Śiva say? What did he do? Please narrate to me. I am eager to know it.

Sanatkumāra said:—

2. On hearing the words of Kālī, lord Śiva, the actor of great divine sports, laughed. Śiva consoled her.

3. On hearing the celestial voice, Śiva, an expert in the knowledge of principles, went himself to the battle along with his Gaṇas.

4. He was seated on his great bull and surrounded by Vīrabhadra and others, the Bhairavas and the Kṣetrapālas all equal in valour to him.

5. Assuming a heroic form, lord Śiva entered the

battle ground. There Śiva shone well as the embodied form of the annihilator.

6. On seeing Śiva, Śaṅkhacūḍa got down from the aerial chariot, bowed with great devotion and fell flat on the ground.

7. After bowing to him he immediately got into his chariot. He speedily prepared for the fight and seized the bow and the arrows.

8. The fight between Śiva and the Dānava went on for a hundred years and they showered arrows fiercely like clouds pouring down incessantly.

9. The heroic Śaṅkhacūḍa discharged terrible arrows playfully. Śiva split all of them by means of his arrows.

10. Mahārudra, the odd-eyed Śiva, the punisher of the wicked and the goal of the good, angrily hit his limbs with various weapons.

11. Taking up his sharp sword and the leather shield the Dānava rushed at the sacred bull of Śiva and hit it on its head.

12. When his bull was hit, Śiva sportively cut off the sword and the shining shield by means of his Kṣurapra.

13. When the shield was split, the Asura hurled his spear. Śiva split it into two with his arrow as it came before him.

14. The infuriated Dānava, Śaṅkhacūḍa hurled a discus. Immediately Śiva smashed it into pieces with his fist.

15. He hurled his club with force at Śiva. Rapidly split by Śiva, the club was reduced to ashes.

16. Then seizing an axe with his hand, the infuriated king of Dānavas, Śaṅkhacūḍa rushed at Śiva.

17. By the volley of his arrows Śiva sportively struck the Asura with axe in his hand.

18. The Dānava quickly regained consciousness and got into his excellent chariot. With divine weapons and arrows he encompassed the whole sky and shone.

19. On seeing him coming on, Śiva sounded his Ḍamaru enthusiastically and twanged the bowstring, the noise whereof was unbearable.

20. The lord filled all the quarters with the sound of his horn. Śiva himself roared then, frightening the Asuras.

21. The lordly bull then bellowed putting the haughty trumpeting elephants to shame. The deep roar filled the sky, the earth and the eight quarters.

22. With his hands the fierce lord Śiva clapped the earth and the sky. All the previous shouts and roars were surpassed by that sound.

23. The Kṣetrapāla produced a boisterous laughing sound boding ill to the Asuras. In that great battle Bhairava too roared.

24. There was a terrific tumult in the midst of that battle. All round amongst the Gaṇas, the shouts of heroes rose up.

25. The Dānavas were frightened by those harsh and terrible sounds. On hearing them the powerful king of Dānavas became very furious.

26. When Śiva shouted "O wicked one, stay by. Stay by", the gods and the Gaṇas rapidly shouted "victory, Victory".

27. Then coming again the valorous son of Dambha hurled at Rudra his spear terrible with shooting flames.

28. While it came on, blazing brilliantly like a great conflagration in the battleground, it was immediately suppressed by Kṣeṭrapāla by means of the meteor springing from his mouth.

29. Again the great battle between Śiva and the Dānava was resumed. The heaven and the earth including all mountains, oceans and rivers shook and trembled.

30. Śiva split up the arrows discharged by the son of Dambha by means of hundred and thousands of his fierce arrows. Similarly the arrows of Śiva were split up by the Dānava.

31. Then the infuriated Śiva hit him with his trident. Unable to bear that blow he fell unconscious on the ground.

32. The Asura regained consciousness rapidly. He seized his bow and hit Rudra and all others by means of his arrows.

33. The valorous Śaṅkhacūḍa assumed ten thousand arms by means of magic and rapidly enveloped Śiva by means of ten thousand discuses.

34. Then Śiva, the infuriated consort of Durgā, the

destroyer of all insurmountable distress split the discuses rapidly by means of his excellent arrows.

35. Then the Dānava seized his mace and accompanied by a huge army rushed at Śiva with the intention to kill him.

36. The infuriated Śiva, the destroyer of the pride of the wicked split the mace of the Dānava rushing headlong by means of a sharp-edged sword.

37. When the mace was split, the Dānava became very furious. The brilliant Dānava took up a spear that blazed unbearable to the enemies.

38. By means of his trident Śiva hit the comely king of Dānavas rapidly in the chest even as he approached with the spear in his hand.

39. From the chest of Śaṅkhacūḍa pierced by the trident, a valorous huge being came out and said "Stand by, Stand by".

40. Laughing noisily Śiva severed the terrible head of the being that was coming out, by means of a sword. He fell on the ground.

41. Then spreading her mouth wide open Kālī furiously devoured innumerable Asuras whose heads were crushed by her fierce fangs.

42. The excited and infuriated Kṣetrapāla devoured many other Daityas. Some were killed struck down by Bhairava's missiles. Others were wounded.

43. Vīrabhadra furiously destroyed many other heroes. Nandīśvara killed many other demons.

44. Thus the other Gaṇas, readily prepared and furiously heroic, destroyed many Daityas, Asuras and suppressors of the gods.

45. Thus a major portion of his army was destroyed there. Many other soldiers, cowardly and terrified, fled.

CHAPTER FORTY

(Śaṅkhacūḍa is slain)

Sanatkumāra said:—

1. On seeing the important and major portion of his army killed, including heroes as dear to him as his life, the Dānava became very furious.

2. He spoke to Śiva. "I am here standing ready. Be steady in the battle. What is it to me, if these are killed? Fight me standing face to face".

3. O sage, after saying this and resolving resolutely the king of Dānavas stood ready facing Śiva.

4. The Dānava hurled divine missiles at him and showered arrows like the cloud pouring rain.

5. He exhibited various kinds of deceptive measures invisible and inscrutable to all the excellent gods and Gaṇas and terrifying as well.

6. On seeing that, Śiva sportively discharged thereat the excessively divine Māheśvara missiles that destroy all illusions.

7. All the illusions, were quelled rapidly by its brilliance. Though they were divine missiles they became divested of their brilliance.

8. Then in the battle, the powerful lord Śiva suddenly seized his trident which could not be withstood even by brilliant persons, in order to slay him.

9. In order to prevent him then, an unembodied celestial voice said—"O Śiva, do not hurl the trident now. Please listen to this request.

10. O Śiva, by all means, you are competent to destroy the entire universe in a trice. What doubt then in regard to a single Dānava Śaṅkhacūḍa ?

11. Still, the limit imposed by the Vedas should not be disregarded by you, the lord. O great god, listen to that. Make it truthful and fruitful.

12-13. O lord Śiva, it has been mentioned by Brahmā, that, as long as he wears the armour of Viṣṇu and as long as his wife maintains the marital fidelity, Śaṅkhacūḍa has neither death nor old age. Please make those words truthful.'

14. On hearing this celestial voice, Śiva said "So be it". Viṣṇu came there at the wish of Śiva. Śiva, who is the goal of the good, commanded him.

15. Then, in the guise of an old brahmin, Viṣṇu, the foremost of those who wield magic, approached Śaṅkhacūḍa and told him.

The aged brahmin said:—

16-17. "O lord of Dānavas, give me the alms for which I have come to you. I shall not say openly what I wish to have from you who are favourably disposed to the distressed. I shall tell you when you have promised me first.

18. With face and eyes indicating pleasure the king replied affirmatively. Then the deceptive Viṣṇu in the form of a brahmin said—"I am the suppliant for your armour."

19. On hearing that, the lord of Dānavas, a well wisher of the brahmins and of truthful word handed over the divine armour, his vital breath, to the brahmin.

20. Viṣṇu thus snatched off his armour by means of deception. Then in the guise of Śaṅkhacūḍa Viṣṇu approached Tulasī.

21. Lord Viṣṇu, an expert in wielding magic went there and deposited his semen in her vaginal passage for the protection of gods.

22. In the meantime the lord of Dānavas approached Śiva without the armour. He took up his trident that blazed to slay Śaṅkhacūḍa.

23. That trident, named Vijaya, of Śiva, the great Ātman, shone illuminating heaven and earth.

24. It was as refulgent as a crore midday suns and as fierce as the shooting flame of fire at the time of dissolution. It could neither be prevented nor withstood. It was never ineffective in destroying enemies.

25. It had a fierce halo all round. It was the best of all weapons and missiles. It was unbearable to gods and Asuras. It was terrible to all.

26. In order to annihilate the whole cosmos sportively all brilliance had converged into it.

27. It was a thousand Dhanus in length and a hundred

Hastas in width. It was in the form of individual as well as universal soul. It was eternal and uncreated.

28. That trident whirling round over the head of Śaṅkhacūḍa for a while fell on the head of the Dānava at the behest of Śiva and reduced him to ashes.

29. O brahmin, then it rapidly returned to Śiva and having finished its work went away by the aerial path with the speed of the mind.

30. The Dundubhis were sounded in the heaven. Gandharvas and Kinnaras sang. The sages and the gods eulogised and the celestial damsels danced.

31. A continuous shower of flowers fell over Śiva. Viṣṇu, Brahmā, Indra, other gods and sages praised him.

32. Śaṅkhacūḍa the king of Dānavas was released from his curse by the favour of Śiva. He regained his original form.

33. All the conches in the world are formed of the bones of Śaṅkhacūḍa. Except for Śiva, the holy water from the conch is sacred for every one.

34. O great sage, particularly to Viṣṇu and Lakṣmī the water from the conch is pleasant. To all persons connected with Viṣṇu it is so but not to Śiva.

35. After slaying him thus, Śiva went to Śivaloka seated on his bull, joyously, accompanied by Pārvatī, Kārttikeya and the Gaṇas.

36. Viṣṇu went to Vaikuṇṭha. Kṛṣṇa became complacent. The gods went to their abodes with great delight.

37. The universe regained normalcy. The whole earth was freed of obstacles. The sky was pure. The whole world became auspicious.

38. Thus I have narrated to you the delightful story of lord Śiva that removes all misery, yields wealth and fulfils cherished desires.

39. It is conducive to prosperity and longevity. It prevents all obstacles. It yields worldly pleasure and salvation. It confers the fruits of all cherished desires.

40-41. The intelligent man who hears or narrates the story of the moon-crested lord, or reads or teaches it shall undoubtedly derive wealth, grains, progeny, happiness, all desires and particularly devotion to Śiva.

42. This narrative is unequalled. It destroys all torments. It generates great knowledge. It increases devotion to Śiva.

43. The brahmin listener attains brahminical splendour; the Kṣatriya becomes a conqueror; the Vaiśya rich and the Śūdra the most excellent of men.

CHAPTER FORTYONE

(*The curse of Tulasī*)

Vyāsa said:—

1. How did the lord Nārāyaṇa manage to deposit his semen in the vaginal passage of Tulasī? Please narrate the same.

Sanatkumāra said:—

2. Nārāyaṇa is the person who carries on the task of the gods. He is the goal of the good. It was in the guise of Śaṅkhacūḍa that he indulged in sexual dalliance with his wife.

3. Listen to the story of Viṣṇu that causes delight, the story of Viṣṇu who acts at the behest of Śiva and Pārvatī, the mother of the worlds.

4-5. On hearing the aerial voice in the course of the war and urged by lord Śiva, Viṣṇu carried off the excellent armour of Śaṅkhacūḍa assuming the guise of a brahmin, rapidly, by having recourse to his Māyā. He then assumed the guise of Śaṅkhacūḍa and went to Tulasī's palace.

6. Very near the entrance to Tulasī's palace he caused the drum Dundubhi to be beaten and cries of victory to be raised. He thus made the beautiful woman wake up.

7. On hearing it that chaste lady was highly delighted. Eagerly she peeped through the window into the high way.

8. Knowing that her husband had returned she observed all auspicious rites and offered monetary gifts to the brahmins. She then beautified herself.

9. After decending from the chariot, Viṣṇu who

assumed the guise of Śaṅkhacūḍa by deceptive art for the sake of carrying out the task of the gods went to the apartment of the queen.

10. On seeing her husband come before her she became delighted. She washed his feet, bowed to him and cried.

11. She made him sit on the gemset throne of great beauty. She handed him the auspicious betel leaf rendered fragrant with camphor.

12. "It is today that my life has become fruitful since I see my beloved lover who had gone to fight back in the abode again".

13. Saying so glancing at him with ogling eyes and smiling face she sweetly asked him about the events at the battlefield.

Tulasī said:—

14-18. "O lord, how did you fare in the battle with Śiva who renders help to the gods? You had gone to fight Śiva who is the foremost of the gods, who is the annihilator of innumerable universes, whose behests are strictly adhered to and carried out by Viṣṇu, Brahmā and other gods always, who is the progenitor of the three deities, who is the soul of three attributes, who being devoid of attributes puts on the form of attributes at the request and wish of the devotees; who makes Viṣṇu and Brahmā work, who assumed the form of Śiva the resident of Kailāsa at the request of Kubera, who is the lord of Gaṇas, the supreme Brahman, the goal of the good; in a single moment according to whose calculation a crore cosmic worlds undergo destruction; and in whose minutest time many Viṣṇus, Brahmās and others pass away. It is with such a Śiva that you had gone to fight.

19. You have happily returned after defeating him, the great lord. How did you win? Please mention that to me."

20. On hearing these words of Tulasī, Viṣṇu, the lord of Lakṣmī who had assumed the guise of Śaṅkhacūḍa, laughed and spoke sweet words to her.

Lord Viṣṇu said:—

21. "When I, fond of war, reached the battle ground there was a great tumult. A great battle ensued.

22. There ensued the battle between the gods and the Dānavas both desiring victory. The daityas were defeated by the gods who were proud of their strength.

23. Then I fought with the powerful gods. The gods defeated by me sought refuge in Śiva.

24. In order to help them Śiva came to fight. Proud of strength I fought with him for a long time.

25. My dear wife, we fought continuously for a year. O lovely woman, all the Asuras were destroyed.

26. Brahmā made us come to a peace. At the bidding of Brahmā the powers of authority were re-assigned to the gods.

27. I have returned home. Śiva has returned to Śivaloka. Every one has resumed health and normalcy. The torment has receded."

Sanatkumāra said:—

28. After saying this the lord of the worlds lay down on his bed. Then out of joy Viṣṇu indulged in sexual intercourse.

29. That lady began to suspect on observing a change in her happiness, endearment and attraction and asked him "who are you ?

Tulasī said:—

30. Who are you ? Tell me quickly. I have been enjoyed by you deceptively. My modesty has been outraged. Hence I am going to curse you."

Sanatkumāra said :—

31. On hearing the words of Tulasī, Viṣṇu became afraid of the curse. O Brahmin, sportively he re-assumed his own real beautiful form.

32. On seeing the characteristic signs she guessed that it was Viṣṇu. Infuriated by the violation of her chastity she said.

Tulasī said:—

33. "O Viṣṇu, you are ruthless. Your mind is like a rock. Since my chastity has been outraged my husband is doomed.

34. O wicked one, being ruthless you are like a rock. Hence due to my curse you will become a rock.

35. Those who call you ocean of mercy are erring. There is no doubt. How was a devotee killed for another man's sake, even without any offence ?"

Sanatkumāra said:—

36. After saying this, the chaste beloved of Śaṅkhacūḍa, Tulasī lamented again and again in the excess of her grief.

37. On seeing her crying, Viṣṇu remembered lord Śaṅkara, Parameśvara, by whom the universe is deluded.

38. Then Śaṅkara, favourably disposed to his devotees appeared in front of them. He was bowed to and eulogised humbly by Viṣṇu.

39. On seeing Viṣṇu distressed and the beloved lady lamenting, Śiva kind to the poor tactfully enlightened both of them.

Śiva said:—

40. "O Tulasī, do not cry. Every one reaps the fruit of his actions. In the world that is an ocean of actions and rites there is no external entity that bestows happiness and sorrow.

41. Listen to what is relevant to the context to get rid of misery. Let Viṣṇu of good intentions too, listen. I shall mention what is beneficent to both and conducive to happiness.

42. O gentle lady, penance had been performed by you. The fruit thereof has been attained now. How can it be otherwise ?

43. Cast off this body. Take up a divine body and indulgence in dalliance with Viṣṇu for ever. Be equal unto Lakṣhmī.

44. The body that you caste off shall become a river in Bhārata. That will be a sacred river famous as Gaṇḍakī.[279]

45. O great lady, as a boon granted by me, Tulasī (holy basil) will be the most important constituent of the materials of worship of the gods some time.

46. In heaven, earth and the nether worlds you will become the Tulasī plant more excellent than flowers.

47. As the presiding deity of the plant you shall assume a divine form and shall for ever sport in secret with Viṣṇu.

48. The presiding deity of the river in Bhārata, the consort of the briny sea and highly meritorious, shall be a part of Viṣṇu.

49. As a result of your curse, Hari shall assume the form of a rock on the banks of the river Gaṇḍakī and shall preside on the same in Bhārata.

50. Crores of terrible sharp-toothed germs shall penetrate and erode the rock and carve rings on it.

51. Those pieces shall be known as Śālagrāma rocks and will be meritorious. Differentiated by the rings they shall be known as Lakṣmīnārāyaṇa etc.

52. O Viṣṇu, Śālagrāma stone shall signify your contact with Tulasī. Similar in appearance they shall increase merit.

53. O gentle lady, If anyone plucks the leaves of Tulasī lying on Śālagrāma he will be separated from his wife in the next birth.

54. If any one plucks Tulasī leaves without using conch he will become a widower and a chronic patient for seven births.

55. He who keeps Śālagrāma, Tulasī and Śaṅkha in one place shall become wise and a favourite of Viṣṇu.

56. You have been the beloved of Śaṅkhacūḍa for the

279. The river Gaṇḍaki issues from the Himalayan foothills, rises in Bihar and joins the Ganges near Sonepur in the Muzaffarpur District. Cp. MKP. Ch. 57.

विपाशा देविका रङ्क्षुर्निश्चीरा गण्डकी तथा ।
कौशिकी चापगा विप्र हिमवत्पादनिस्सृताः ॥

It is one of the most sacred rivers and is the source of Śālagrāmaśilas.

period of a Manvantara. Your separation from Śaṅkha cūḍa is really painful to you.

Sanatkumāra said:—

57. After saying so, Śiva narrated the greatness of Śālagrāma stone and Tulasī, that is highly meritorious.

58. After delighting Viṣṇu and Tulasī, Śiva the benefactor of the good vanished from there and went to his abode.

59. On hearing the words of Śiva, Tulasī was delighted. She cast off that body and assumed a divine form.

60. The lord of Lakṣmī went to Vaikuṇṭha with her. Immediately the river Gaṇḍakī took its origin from her cast off body.

61. On its banks Viṣṇu became a mountain conferring merit on men. O sage, germs make different kinds of holes therein.

62. The pieces that fall into the water are highly meritorious. Those that remain on the dry land are known as Piṅgalas. They are harmful.

63. Thus I have narrated everything in accordance with your enquiry. The story of Śiva is meritorious and bestows all cherished desires on men.

64. This narrative has been made in detail intermingled with the greatness of Viṣṇu. It confers worldly pleasures and salvation. What is it that you wish to hear further ?

CHAPTER FORTYTWO

(*Hiraṇyākṣa is slain*)

Nārada said:—

1. I am not satiated by hearing the story of the mooon-crested lord Śiva including the annihilation of Śaṅkhacūḍa from you even as people are not satiated by drinking nectar.

2. Please narrate another story of that great soul, lord Śiva who indulges in divine sports delightful to the devotees, by resorting to magic practices.

Brahmā said:—

3. On hearing the story of the annihilation of Śaṅkhacūḍa Vyāsa the son of Satyavatī[280] enquired of the excellent sage, son of Brahmā, the very same matter.

4. Sanatkumāra narrated to Vyāsa—the son of Satyavatī—the auspicious and admirable story of lord Śiva.

Sanatkumāra said:—

5. O Vyāsa, listen to the auspicious story of lord Śiva in relation to Andhaka how the latter attained the leadership of Gaṇas from Śiva, the great soul.

6. O great sage, it was after a great fight with the gods and by propitiating lord Śiva again and again with Sāttvika devotion that he attained the leadership.

7. It is wonderful indeed, the greatness of Śiva is wonderful. Śiva protects those who seek refuge in him. He is favourably disposed to his devotees. He indulges in different kinds of sports.

8. On hearing about the greatness of the bull-bannered lord, the sage, son of Gandhavatī bowed to the great sage, son of Brahmā, with devotion and spoke these meaningful words.

Vyāsa said:—

9. O holy one, O lord of sages, who is this Andhaka? In which warrior family on the earth was this powerful great Andhaka born? What was his parentage? What is his importance?

10. O son of Brahmā, please let me know all this entirely along with its mystic secrets. You[281] have learnt this well from Kārttikeya of immeasurable enlightenment, the son of lord Śiva.

280. Satyavatī, mother of Vyāsa, was also called Matsyagandhā, Mīnagandhā or Gandhavatī. See V. 8 below

281. The reading त्वया for मया suits the context.

11. How did he obtain the leadership of the Gaṇas from Śiva of great splendour? Really that Andhaka was blessed since he became the lord of the Gaṇas.

Brahmā said:—

12. On hearing the words that son of Brahmā spoke to Vyāsa the father of Śuka[282] who desired to hear about the wonderful sports of lord Śiva which give prosperity to the hearer.

Sanatkumāra said:—

13. Formerly Śiva, the Emperor of the gods, kind to his devotees came to Kāśī[283] from Kailāsa accompanied by Pārvatī, the daughter of the mountain and his Gaṇas because he was desirous of sporting there.

14. He built his capital there. He appointed the hero Bhairava as its protector. Then he performed many sports, pleasing to the people, in the company of Pārvatī the daughter of the mountain.

15. Once he went to the mountain Mandara[284] to see its excellent grandeur. He sported much in the company of Śiva and the various principal heroic Gaṇas.

16. While sporting on the eastern ridges of the Mandara mountain, Pārvatī sportively and playfully closed the eyes of Śiva of fierce exploit.

17. She closed the eyes with her lotus-like hands which had the lustre of coral and golden lotus. When Śiva's eyes were closed, a great darkness spread immediately.

18. By this contact with lord Śiva the rapturous rutting juice exuded from her hands became hot by the fire of the eye on his forehead and flowed out in copious drops.

19. Conception took place and a terrible inhuman being manifested itself. It was furious, ungrateful, blind[285],

282. Śuka was the son of Vyāsa. He is said to have narrated the Bhāgavatapurāṇa to king Parīkṣit.

283. See Note 227 P. 266

284. See Note 36 P. 48

285. For the conflict between the blind Asura Andhaka and lord Śiva, Cp. Matsya P. Ch. 179. For the symbolical interpretation of this episode see Matsyapurāṇa—A Study, PP. 275-277.

deformed, and black in colour. It had matted locks of hair and fine hair all over the body.

20. It sang, cried, laughed, danced, put out its tongue like a serpent and thundered fiercely. When this curious creature arose, Śiva smilingly spoke to Pārvatī.

Lord Śiva said:—

21. "You did it yourself by closing my eyes. O my beloved, why are you afraid of it now? On hearing these words of Śiva, Pārvatī smilingly took off her hands from the eyes.

22. When light spread everywhere the blind being appeared even more terrible. On seeing such a being, Pārvatī asked her lord Śiva.

Pārvatī said:—

23. O lord, what is this ugly hideous being that is born in front of us. Please tell me the truth. Why was it created? By whom? Whose child is it?

Sanatkumāra said:—

24. On hearing these words of his beloved, the sportively inclined mother of the three worlds and the cause of creation of the blind creatures, lord Śiva himself indulging in sports smilingly said:—

Lord Śiva said:—

25. O Pārvatī of mysterious activities, listen. When my eyes were closed by you, this being of wonderfully fierce might was born of my sweat. He shall be named Andhaka.

26. You are the cause of his creation though not in the natural way. He shall be guarded by the Gaṇas lovingly as well as by you along with your friends. His well being rests with you. O noble lady, pondering over this intelligently you shall do every thing.

Sanatkumāra said:—

27. On hearing the words of her lord, Pārvatī was very compassionate. Accompanied by her friends, she made

arrangements for his safety in diverse ways and means as if he were her own son.

28. At that time, the Asura Hiraṇyākṣa desired to obtain a son at the pressure of his wife who was envious at the sight of many sons of her husband's elder brother.[286] Accordingly he set out in the season of late winter.

29. He resorted to forest and performed penance for obtaining son. In order to see lord Śiva he performed a rigorous penance conquering the passions of anger etc. and remaining insensible to external sensation as does a log of wood.

30. The trident-bearing lord was pleased at his penance. O great brahmin he went there in order to grant him the boon. After reaching that spot, lord Śiva, the bull-bannered lord, spoke to the leading Daitya.

Lord Śiva said:—

31. "O lord of Daityas, do not curb your senses so much. Why have you taken up this sacred rite ? Speak out what you desire. I am Śiva, the granter of desires. I shall grant whatever you desire."

Sanatkumāra said:—

32. On hearing the pleasing words of lord Śiva, the Daitya Hiraṇyākṣa was delighted. He joined his palms in reverence and humbly bowed his head. Eulogising and bowing in various ways he spoke to lord Śiva.

Hiraṇyākṣa said:—

33. O moon-crested lord, I have no powerful son befitting the race of Daityas. It is for this purpose that I have resorted to penance. O lord of gods, give me a powerful son.

34. My brother has five sons of infinite valour, Prahlāda being the eldest. I don't have any son. My family is likely to be extinct. Who will inherit my kingdom after me?

286. It refers to Hiraṇyakaśipu, the elder brother of Hiraṇyākṣa. The former had five sons while the latter had none. See V. 34 below.

35. He alone merits to be the son who enjoys either the inherited kingdom of his father or the kingdom of another taken by force. That father alone can call himself possessed of a son with such a son.

36. An abode in heaven is enjoined only for those who have sons as mentioned by the learned and the virtuous. All living beings are active in that respect.[287]

37. A person whose family is extinct cannot have higher regions.[288] It is for obtaining the son that people worship the deities.

Sanatkumāra said:—

38. On hearing these words of the king, the kind-hearted Śiva was satisfied and spoke thus—"O ruler of Daityas, there may not be a son born of your semen. But I shall grant you a son.

39. My son Andhaka has a prowess equal to yours. He cannot be defeated by any. You choose him as your son. Cast off your distress and accept him as your son."

40. After saying this, the delighted lord gave the son to Hiraṇyākṣa.[289] Śiva, the great soul, the primordial lord of Bhūtas, the distroyer of Tripuras, the fierce god went away, accompanied by Pārvatī.

41. After getting a son from Śiva that Daitya circum-ambulated Śiva and worshipped him with many hymns. Joyously the noble Asura returned to kingdom.

42. Having obtained a son from Śiva, the demon of great and fierce valour conquered all the gods and took the earth to Pātāla.

43. Then the gods, sages and the Siddhas propitiated

287. The fourth Pāda of the Sanskrit text is obscure. Hence the present English translation of the relevant portion is conjectural.

288. The ancient Indian scriptures hold that a person cannot enter into heaven without having a son. The present context shows that this view prevailed even among the Asuras.

289. The custom of adopting sons prevailed in ancient India. The adopted son enjoyed all the prerogatives of the natural son.' He could offer oblations to his adopted father when he expired and legally inherit his property. It is evident from the present context that the practice was in vogue even among the Asuras.

Viṣṇu of infinite vigour in the form of a Boar that constituted all sacrifices and all beings and was terrific in form.

44-46. He split the earth by beating and striking with his snout and entered Pātāla. He powdered hundreds of Daityas with his nose and the formidable curved fangs. He smashed the armies of the Asuras by kicking with his legs dazzling like lightning. He had a wonderfully fierce refulgence. With his Sudarśana dazzling like a crore of suns he chopped off the burning head of Hiraṇyākṣa and reduced the wicked Daityas to ashes. He was then delighted to crown his son Andhaka as the king of Daityas.

47. He returned to his abode. He lifted up the earth from the Pātāla by means of his fangs. He sustained the Earth as before.

48. Eulogised by the gods, the delighted sages, and Brahmā, lord Viṣṇu of huge body who had assumed the form of a Boar finished the task and returned to his abode.

49. When Hiraṇyākṣa the king of Asuras was killed by Viṣṇu assuming the form of a Boar,[290] the gods, sages and other living beings became happy.

CHAPTER FORTYTHREE

(Hiraṇyakaśipu is slain)

Vyāsa said:—

1. O Santakumāra of great intellect, when that Asura was killed what did his elder brother, the great Asura, do?

2. O great sage, I am eager to hear this. O son of Brahmā, please narrate the same. Obeisance be to you.

Brahmā said:—

3. On hearing these words of Vyāsa, that great sage, Sanatkumāra spoke after remembering the lotus like feet of Śiva.

290. It refers to the Daitya Hiraṇyākṣa who dragged the earth to the depths of the ocean. Viṣṇu incarnated himself as the Boar, slew the Daitya and restored the earth to its original position.

Sanatkumāra said :—

4. When his brother was thus killed by Viṣṇu in the form of a Boar, O Vyāsa, Hiraṇyakaśipu was distressed with grief and excited by anger.

5. Always fond of enmity with Viṣṇu that he was, he instigated heroic Asuras, fond of havoc, to work havoc among the people.

6. Receiving the command of their lord with bowed heads, the Asura fond of havoc worked havoc among the gods and the people.

7. Thus when the universe was utterly disturbed by the evil-minded Asuras, the gods abandoned heaven and roamed on the Earth unobserved.

8. After performing the obsequies and water obla-[291] tions to his departed brother, the distressed Hiraṇyakaśipu consoled his wife and others.

9. Then the emperor of the Daityas desired to make himself invincible, undying, unageing, unrivalled and sole ruler.

10. He performed a severe penance in the ravine of the Mandara mountain. Keeping his arms lifted up he fixed his eyes on the sky. He stood on the Earth on his big toes alone.

11. When he was perfoming penance, the gods accompanied by their forces defeated the Daityas and regained their lost seats.

12. The smoking fire of penance springing from his head, spreading all round scorched the worlds all round, above and below.

13. The gods scorched by that, abandoned heaven and went to Brahmā's region. With their faces turned pale and deformed by his penance they informed the creator of every thing.

14. O Vyāsa, thus informed by the gods, the self-born Brahmā went to the hermitage of the Daitya accompanied by Bhṛgu, Dakṣa and others.

291. A handful of water mixed with sesamum is offered to the departed soul.

15. The Asura who had already scorched the worlds saw that the lotus-born deity had arrived. In order to grant him the boon Dhātṛ the grandfather of the worlds said—"Choose a boon." On hearing the sweet words of the creator, the Asura of undismayed intellect spoke thus.

Hiraṇyakaśipu said:—

16-17. "O creator, O lord of subjects, never may I have the fear of death from weapons, missiles, thunderbolts, dry trees, mountains, water, fire and onslaught of enemies—gods, Daityas, sages, Siddhas or in fact from any living being created by you. Why should I expatiate on it? Let there be no death for me in heaven, on earth, in the day time, at night, from above or below, O lord of subjects!"

Sanatkumāra said:—

18. On hearing these words of the Asura, the merciful lotus-born deity bowed to Viṣṇu mentally and spoke—"O lord of Daityas, I am delighted. Attain everything.

19. Stop your penance which has already run on to ninetysix thousand years. You have realised your desires entirely. Stand up. Rule over the kingdom of the Dānavas." On hearing these words, the Asura was pleased and beaming in his face.

20. He was coronated by Brahmā the great grandfather of the worlds. He became inclined to destroy the three worlds. The highly elated Asuras disturbed all righteous activities and defeated all the gods in battle.

21. Then the terrified Indra and other gods harassed by him got the permission of Brahmā and went to the milk ocean[292] where Viṣṇu was lying.

22. Considering him the bestower of happiness, they propitiated and eulogised Viṣṇu with various hymns. When he was pleased they told him their woeful tale.

23-24. On learning their misery in entirety, Viṣṇu, the delighted lord of Lakṣmī granted them boons, Getting up from his couch, Viṣṇu consoled the gods and the sages by means of different words befitting himself. The lord as

292. See Note 200 P. 224

refulgent as the fire said—"O leading gods, I shall kill the Daitya with force. Return to your own abodes fully assured, all of you".

25. O great sage, on hearing the words of Viṣṇu, Indra and other leading gods, fully assured and satisfied, went to their abodes thinking that the younger brother Hiraṇyākṣa was already killed.

26-27. The noble soul Viṣṇu assumed the form partly of lion and partly of man. His head was matted and full of manes. Sharp fangs were his weapons. The claws were keen and pointed. The snout was finely shaped. The mouth was wide open. The body was terrible and refulgent like a crore of suns, blazing and powerful like the fire at the time of dissolution. He was identical with the universe. More words need not be used to describe him. When the sun was about to set, the lord went to the city of the Asuras.

28. The Man-lion fought with the powerful Daityas. He killed many of them. He held them up and whirled. Exhibiting wonderful prowess he smashed and crushed the various Asuras.

29. On seeing that omniformed lion, the son of the lord of Daityas, Prahlāda,[293] said to the king, his father.

Prahlāda said:—

"Is it the universe-formed lord who has come as the majestic lion ?

30. The infinite lord in the form of Man-lion[294] has come within your city. Desist from fight and seek refuge in him. I see the terrible form of the lion.

31. Since there is none to fight him in all the three worlds, it is better that you submit to him and continue to be the ruler."

293. Though son of the Asura Hiraṇyakaśipu, Prahlāda was an ardent devotee of Viṣṇu. He had to suffer much at the hands of his cruel father for devotion to Viṣṇu It was to avenge Prahlāda that Viṣṇu incarnated as the man-lion and killed Hiraṇyakaśipu.

294. The story relates to Hiraṇyakaśipu the younger brother of Hiraṇyākṣa. Hiraṇyakaśipu was proud of his prowess and as blessed by Śiva, could not be killed in an ordinary way. He struck terror in the hearts of the gods whom he had ousted from their vantage positions. He was killed by Viṣṇu assuming the form of Man-lion.

On hearing the words of his son, the wicked Asura said "O son, why are you so afraid ?"

32. Thus addressing his son, the king of the Daityas ordered the heroes among the Daityas—"O ye heroes, catch hold of this lion of hideous brows and eyes."

33. At his behest the leading Daityas who desired to catch the lion approached him but they were burnt in a trice like the moths in the blazing fire attracted by its colour.

34. When the Daityas were burnt the king himself fought with the lion with all kinds of weapons, missiles, spears swords, nooses, goads, fire and the like.

35. O Vyāsa, a day according to the calculation of Brahmā[295] passed by even as they fought with weapons in their hands, roaring heroically and furiously at each other.

36. Then suddenly the Daitya assumed many arms holding weapons. He looked angrily at the fighting man-lion and pounced upon him in a rush.

37. Then after a terrific battle fought by all sorts of weapons and missiles they were exhausted. Then the great Daitya himself seized up a spear and rushed at the man-lion.

38. He was seized by the lord of beasts with hands as powerful as mountains. He was placed on the knee, torn and scratched in the chest by the claws piercing every vulnerable joint in the body.

39. His heart lacerated by his claws was filled with blood. He lay dead like a log of wood, his limbs being reduced to powder.

40. When he was killed, the heroic Viṣṇu was pleased. He beckoned to Prahlāda who bowed to him. He crowned him king and then left for his abode that could not even be imagined.

41. Then the gods were delighted. They bowed to lord Viṣṇu who had finished their task and who deserved worship, O Brahmin. Thereafter Brahmā and others returned to their abodes.

42. Thus incidentally, I have narrated to you the

295. A Brāhma day consists of one kalpa equal to one thousand yugas or a period of four thousand, three hundred and twenty millions of years of mortals, measuring the duration of the world.

story of Andhaka's birth from Rudra, the death of Hiraṇyākṣa at the hands of the Boar, the annihilation of his brother Hiraṇyakaśipu by the Man-lion and the coronation of Prahlāda.

43. O foremost of brahmins, now listen to the prowess of Andhaka secured from the creator, his fight with Śiva and his acquisition afterwards of the leadership of the Gaṇas.

CHAPTER FORTYFOUR

(*Andhaka*'s *attainment of the leadership of Gaṇas*)

Sanatkumāra said:—

1. Once Andhaka, the son of Hiraṇyākṣa, was addressed jokingly by his haughty cousins in the course of their sports and games—"O blind fellow, what will you do with kingdom?

2. Hiraṇyākṣa was a fool who adopted you as son who are bereft of eyesight, fond of quarrel, ugly and hideous, after propitiating Śiva by means of severe penances.

3. You cannot lay claim to the kingdom. Can a person other than the son of a king ever aspire for the kingdom ? You yourself can ponder over it. At the most we can give you some share."

Sanatkumāra said:—

4. On hearing their words Andhaka was distressed. He thought over the matter intelligently. He then appeased his cousins with various words. In the night he went to a desolate forest.

5. For ten thousand years he performed a severe penance, repeating mantras. He stood on one leg, observed fast and lifted up his arms continuously. In short, he performed a penance that no god or Asura could do.

6. Every day he cut a piece of flesh and consigned it to the sacred blazing fire along with his blood repeating the mantras all along.[296] This he continued for a year.

296. The Asuras performed austere penance to acquire power. Sometime these were accompanied by the sacrifice of their flesh and blood in the fire. Such practices had almost become a cult with the Asuras.

7. In the end only the bones and the nerves were left. The entire blood was exhausted. When there remained no flesh to offer he desired to offer his whole body into the fire.

8. Then he was seen by the heaven-dwellers, all of whom became frightened and bewildered. Then Brahmā the creator was immediately propitiated and eulogised by the gods.

9. Brahmā stopped him and said—"O Dānava, choose a boon. Whatever is inaccessible in the universe, if you desire it, you can have it."

10. On hearing the words of Brahmā, the Daitya piteously bowed to him and said—"May Prahlāda and others who have cruelly usurped my share in the kingdom be my slaves.

11. I am now blind but let me be endowed with divine vision. Let Indra and others pay me tax and tribute. Let no death come to me from gods, Daityas, Gandharvas, Yakṣas, serpents or human beings.

12. Nor shall I meet with death from Nārāyaṇa, the enemy of leading Daityas, or from the omniscient and omniformed Śiva".

On hearing these words of the demon, Brahmā became suspicious. He told him:—

Brahmā said:—

13. "O leader of Daityas, whatever you ask shall take place. But accept some cause of death because none who is born or who will be born can escape the jaws of death.

14. Good men like you should rather avoid too long a life".

On hearing these pleading words from Brahmā, the Daitya said again.

Andhaka said:—

15. "The most excellent of the ladies in the world for all time whether of mature, middle or young age shall be like a mother unto me.

16. She may be the rarest in the world, unapproachable to all men, bodily, mentally or verbally. O self-born

lord, should I covet her, let destruction befall me instantaneously depriving me of the position of the ruler".

17. On hearing these words, Brahmā was surprised. He remembered the lotus like feet of Śiva. After receiving the directive from him, he spoke to Andhaka.

Brahmā said:—

18. "O leader of Daityas, whatever you desire shall necessarily be realised. O king of Daityas, stand up. Realise your ambition. But always fight with heroic persons."

19. O great sage, after listening to these words of the creator, and immediately bowing to him with devotion, the son of Hiraṇyākṣa who had but sinews and bones left spoke to the lord.

20. "O lord, how can I enter the hosts of the enemy with this body and fight? Make me who am merely a skeleton with sinews left endowed with flesh. Touch me now with your holy hand."

Sanatkumāra said:—

21. On hearing his words Brahmā touched his body with his hand and returned to his abode accompanied by the great gods and worshipped by the sages and Siddhas.

22. The moment he was touched, he became full bodied and strong. With eyes regaining sight he became beautiful and stout. Thus he entered his city.

23. Considering him blessed with the boon, on his arrival Prahlāda and other leading Dānavas surrendered the entire kingdom to him and became his slaves.

24. Then Andhaka went to the heaven to conquer it accompanied by his army and attendants. After defeating the gods in battle he made Indra pay him tribute.

25. He conquered the Nāgas, Suparṇas, Rākṣasas, Gandharvas, Yakṣas, human beings, and became the lord of mountains, trees and quadrupeds such as lions etc. by his force.

26-27. He made the universe including the mobile and immobile beings subservient to him. He acquired thousands of women beautiful in appearance amiable and faithful. He was accompanied by beautiful women of the

nether regions[297] and of Earth and heaven.[298] He indulged with them in sexual dalliance on the beautiful banks of the rivers, mountains and other places.

28. Sporting about in their midst joyously, he drank divine and superhuman beverages left over by them and became highly elated.

29. He enjoyed among other excellent things, divine juices, fruits, fragrant flowers, fine conveyances very pleasant to drive in and excellent mansions erected by Maya.

30. Thus indulging in sports he passed ten thousand years beautified and rendered pleasant and mysteriously wonderful by means of flowers, incenses, unguents and dietary stuffs.

31. He did not know what would be auspicious and beneficent to him in the other world. He was deluded, blinded by pride and spoiled by his association with the wicked.

32. The haughty fellow attacked leading scholars by using fallacious arguments. Posing as a great soul he roamed about with his Daitya friends destroying Vedic rites.

33. Proud of his affluence he slighted the Vedas, gods and preceptors. He continued to indulge in sports, thereby reducing his longevity in a few days.

34. Then many crores of years passed by. Once, roaming about on the Earth with his army, he joyously went to the Mandara mountain.

35. The haughty demon roamed there along with his armies admiring its golden splendour. Having gone there ostensibly for some sport and pastime he finally resolved to stay there as destiny would have it.

36. He built a wonderful stable and auspicious city on the ridges of the Mandara and forced people to settle there gradually.

37. His three ministers Duryodhana, Vaidhaśa and

297. See Note 161 P. 760.

298. Triviṣṭapa or Tripiṣṭapa is the heaven of Indra, said to be situated on Mount Meru.

Hasti once saw a beautiful woman in an excellent spot on the mountain.

38. They hastened to their lord joyously and lovingly told him what they had seen there.

The ministers said:—

39. O lord of Daityas, in a mountain cavern we have seen a certain sage. His eyes are closed in meditation. He is handsome. The crescent moon adorns his head. He is wearing an elephant hide round his hips.

40. Serpents twine round his body. A necklace of skulls adorns his neck. His hair is matted. He holds a trident in his hand. He has arrows and quiver. He is a great archer. He displays a rosary.

41. He wields a sword. He holds a trident and a staff. This fair-complexioned four-armed sage of matted hair has smeared ashes over his body. His splendour is dazzling and his dress and features are wonderful.

42. Not far from him, another person was seen. He has simian features, very terrible in face and demeanour. Equipped with weapons his hands are rough and brawny. He is the guard on duty. There is a white bull, too old but firm and steady.

43. A woman of very auspicious features, young and beautiful was seen at the side of that sage. She is a gem under the sun.

44. She is richly bedecked in corals, pearls, jewels gold gems and is dressed neatly. Her necklaces are fine and auspicious. He who has seen her can alone be called a man of sight. Of what awaits the sight of anything else?

45. O lord of Daityas, enjoyer of good jewels, that divine lady, wife and the beloved of that meritorious sage, is worthy of being seen and fetched here.

Sanatkumāra said:—

46. On hearing their words, the Daitya became lustful. He shook with excitement. Immediately he sent Duryodhana and others to the sage.

47. O great sage, those excellent ministers well versed in statesmanship approached the inscrutable sage of exalted

rites. After bowing they conveyed to him the behest of the Daitya.

The ministers said:—

48. "Andhaka the noble soul, son of Hiraṇyākṣa, the king of Daityas, the emperor of the three worlds, is camping here now at the instance of Brahmā and is sportively inclined.

49. O great sage, we are his ministers possessed of great prowess. We have come to you at his behest. Listen with attention to what he says.

50. Whose son are you ? O great sage, O intelligent one, why are you stationed here in a carefree manner ? Whose wife is this young beautiful lady ? O great sage, this auspicious lady be given to the lord of Daityas.

51. Where this body of yours smeared with ashes, bedecked with necklaces of skulls and hideous in appearance! Why do you keep the quiver, the bow, the arrows, the sword, the missile Bhuśuṇḍi, the trident, the thunderbolt and the iron club ?

52. Where this sacred Gaṅgā, this crescent moon, the matted hair, these pieces of bones from the corpse, the serpent with poisonous breath and protruding mouth, and where the close embrace of the lady of plump bosom !

53. Riding on a bull is despicable. No man on earth has seen such a thing. Bowing and kneeling is a virtue in some places. Why is this diet contrary to the way of the world ?

54. Surrender your wife unto me peacefully. O foolish fellow, why do you perform your penance in the company of a lady ? It is improper and it does not behove you. I am the lord of jewels in the three worlds (It may suit me).

55. Leave off your weapons, at my behest and carry on your penance. If my order is transgressed you will have to pay dearly with this very body".

56. Lord Śiva following the worldly convention considered Andhaka a leader of wicked men. On hearing the words of the emissaries he spoke smilingly.

Śiva said:—

57. If I am Śiva what do you gain from me ? Why do you utter false things. O lord of Daityas, listen to my prowess. It is improper on your part to speak like this.

58. I do not remember any father of mine. Ignorant and hideous that I am; I do not know my mother. In a cavern I am performing this severe Pāśupata[299] rite, the like of which none has yet performed.

59. This is well known that I have no root. I cannot get rid of all these things. This wife of mine is young and beautiful. She bears everything patiently. She is the achievement of one that has gone everywhere.

60. O Rākṣasa,[300] whatever appeals to you at present you can take".

After saying this, Śiva who wore the garb of an ascetic stopped, and stood quiet.

Sanatkumāra said:—

61. On hearing his profound words, the Dānavas bowed to him and returned to their leader Andhaka who had taken a bow to destroy the three worlds.

62. The ministers of unafflicted disposition bowed to their haughty king and shouted cries of victory narrating everything that Śiva had smilingly told him. Then they commented as follows.

The Ministers said:—[301]

63. Where (on earth) is a Niśācara seen to be fickle in heroism and courage ? Where is a Dānava miserable and powerless ? Where does a ruthless, ungrateful and sinful Dānava become afraid of death ?

299. Pāśupata or Mahāpāśupata was a terrible form of penance that Śiva undertook to regain his lost power. The performance required a complete concentration of the mind for achieving the end, hence Pārvatī was kept away form the scene of his penance, under the care of Vīraka, in the cave of the Mandara mountain (See also verses 11-12 of the next chapter).

300. In giving the message Śiva addresses Andhaka as Rākṣasa who is elsewhere called Dānava, Daitya or Asura. A veiled contemptuousness is intended to be conveyed by this word in the present context.

301. The Verses 63-67 though spoken by the ministers of Andhaka contain the substance of Śiva's message to the Asura Andhaka. The message is full of irony and bespeaks the courage and self-confidence of the speaker.

64. O king, you are the emperor of all the Daityas. You have been mockingly disparaged by the sage, a pitiable penance-monger. Indeed he considers the three worlds insignificant by his poor understanding. He has Vīraka as his bodyguard whom he thinks to be very strong.

65. "Where am I? Where are the terrible weapons? Where is the fight that terrifies even Death? Where is this Vīraka of Simian facial features? Where is this Niśācara (night-stalker) senile and rickety in limbs?

66. Where is this hideous man? Where is this unfortunate wretch? Where is your strength? Where are the spreading creeping plants? If you are mighty, attempt to fight with him. Come, do something.

67. Here we have weapons equal to thunderbolt ,fierce and capable of destroying people like you. Where is your body as tender as lotus? Pondering over this do as you please."

68. O gentle lord of Dānavas, these and similar words were uttered by that sage. O king, he says all this because he is proud and conceited. Is it not proper then to fight with him?

69. If you are going to be enlightened by these words of no substance uttered by that sage and conveyed by us, you will think and act accordingly.

Sanatkumāra said:—

70. On hearing these words crooked and piercing yet professing to be true and beneficial the dull-witted (Dānava) blazed furiously like fire sprinkled with clarified butter.

71. Proud of the boons granted to him he seized a sword. He emulated the fierce gust of wind. He got ready to go there smitten by the arrows of the cupid though fate was adverse to him.

CHAPTER FORTYFIVE

(The beginning of the war and the conversation with the messengers)

Sanatkumāra said:—

1-3. Andhaka, the great Daitya king, deluded and smitten by Kāma's arrows drank wine and started from his palace. He walked like an elephant in rut. His eyes were roving. He was accompanied by many of his soldiers. He was fierce and walked majestically like heroes. He saw the cavern guarded by Vīraka, standing at the entrance. He exhibited the characteristic reactions of a moth approaching a lamp and glancing at it eagerly and lovingly. Already the burning fire of passion had scorched him and therefore afflicting hits from Vīraka had no effect on him.

4. He was attacked with stones, trees, thunderbolts, water, fire and serpents. He was threatened with weapons and missiles. He was afflicted by Vīraka repeatedly but ineffectively and asked. "Who are you? Why have you come here?"

5. On hearing his words, Andhaka made no reply but began to fight Vīraka when surprisingly and unbelievably he was defeated by Vīraka in the battle.

6. When his sword was shattered to pieces he fled from the battlefield divested of his conceited pride. His throat was parched with hunger and thirst. He was aggrieved.

7. Prahlāda and other important Daityas then fought with Vīraka. Though they were terrible themselves they were defeated by hundreds of weapons. Finally their minds were held in check by the goad of shame.

8. Virocana, Bali, Bāṇa, Sahasrabāhu, Bhaji, Kujambha, Śambara, Vṛtra and others of great valour, fought there.

9. These were defeated by the Gaṇa Vīraka in the course of the battle and split into two. At the end of the

302. It is incomprehensible how four generations of the Asuras represented by हिरण्यकशिपु, प्रह्लाद, विरोचन and बलि could be contemporaneous, and fight together in the battle against the Asuras.

fight when many Dānavas were killed, the Gaṇas of Siddhas shouted "Victory."

10-11. When packs of Jackals began to dance in the midst of the putrefying suets, fat and flesh, when beasts of prey, ghosts and spirits began to roam in the terrible slough of slushy blood, when the Daityas were smashed thus, the trident-bearing lord consoled Pārvatī and said.

Śiva said:—

"O beloved, formerly I had performed the great Vrata called Mahāpāśupata.

12. The strength that I derived therefrom is exhausted whence this fall of the immortals at the hands of the mortals. O goddess, merit has declined due to the physical contact with you.

13. I will create a wonderfully divine and terrible forest and going there I shall perform still more severe vrata whereby, O beautiful lady, you shall be free from fear and sorrow."

Sanatkumāra said:—

14. After saying this, the noble soul went to a holy and terrible forest. He proclaimed loudly his intention and performed penance highly illuminated.

15. Śiva performed penance for a thousand years the like of which could not be performed by the gods or Asuras. Pārvatī stayed behind in Mandara mountain awaiting for the return of the lord.

16. The chaste lady, endowed with good conduct remained alone in that cavern. She was terrified and distressed. Of course she was guarded by her son Vīraka.

17. Then the Daitya whose mental steadiness had been shattered by the arrows of Kāma, became bold and haughty due to the boons that had been granted to him. He came to the cavern accompanied by his soldiers.

18. Forsaking food, drink and sleep, the infuriated Daitya accompanied by his army fought with Vīraka a very wonderful battle for five hundred, five days and nights.

19-21. Various weapons were used by the Daityas—Swords, javelins, slings, maces, sharp missiles, arrows with

crescent-shaped tips, arrows with prolonged iron pikes, tortoise-shaped heads with blazing steel pointed hooks, sharp spear, axes, iron clubs of diverse sorts, iron balls, rocks, branches of trees and various divine missiles. Vīraka was attacked with these weapons and he fainted at the entrance to the cavern. His body was pierced by the sharp weapons hurled by the Daityas. The various weapons barred the entrance to the cave.

22-23. Vīraka was covered by the weapons and could not be extricated. The goddess Pārvatī was afraid at the sight. From within the cave she remembered Brahmā and Viṣṇu.

24. Thus remembered by the goddess, Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Indra and others assumed female forms and came there.[303]

25. Sages of great dignity, Siddhas, Nāgas and Guhyakas became women and entered the cavern where Pārvatī was staying.

26-27. Since it was not customary to enter the harem of kings they assumed female form of wonderful features and entered the cavern of Pārvatī for heroic activities.

28. Thundering sounds of clouds, as at the end of a Kalpa, were produced by these thousands of women. Drums were beaten and conches were blown.

29. Meanwhile Vīraka of wonderfully fierce valour regained his consciousness and stood up. He seized the weapons of the warriors and hit the Daityas with them.

30. Brāhmī stood opposed to the Daityas with the staff in her hand. Gaurī became very furious. Nārāyaṇī held conch, mace, sword, discus and bow in her hands.

31. Biḍaujasī set out holding the thunderbolt and the handle of the ploughshare in her hand. Her complexion was golden. The sky constituted her forelocks. In her fierce velocity thousands of streams of current were let loose.

32. The goddess of thousand eyes, fought steadily in war, undaunted and invincible with hundreds of Daityas.

303. The Śakti or Energy of a god is represented as his female counterpart. Each energy is personified and functions individually. The Purāṇas depict the gods and their Energies fighting against the Asuras. In fact the god and his Energy are identical. There is no characteristic mark distinguishing the two.

The goddess of fire was of none too gentle face and Yāmyā was fierce with staff in her lifted hands.

33. Nairṛti held a fierce bow and a sharp sword in her lifted hands. The female form of Varuṇa set out for fight with noose in her hands.

34. The famale form of fierce storm took up hunger for her physical body and held goad in her hand. The female form of Kubera held a mace in her hand, blazing like the fire at the end of a Kalpa.

35. The female form of the lord of Yakṣas was sharp-faced and hideous. The female form of Nāga was terrible with claws for her weapons. These and hundreds of other goddesses set out for the battle ground.

36. On seeing this limitless vast army, the Daityas were bewildered, pale in the face, excited and dismayed frightened and dejected in the heart.

37. All these celestial damsels, the chief of whom was Brahmāśakti and the general Vīraka of terrible valour pacified the mind of Pārvatī, the daughter of the lord of mountains and assured her.

38. The important ones among the Daityas and others who possessed strength derived from the boons granted to them, thought, in their minds, of their death or retreat and fought an unprecedented great battle with the ladies.

39. Making Vīraka of terrible valour and wonderful intellect, her general, Pārvatī fought a wonderful battle in the company of her friends and allies.

40. Thinking upon Viṣṇu and looking towards the southern direction the Daitya king, the heroic son of Hiraṇyākṣa, quickly made a fierce array of soldiers with Gila at the head.

41. He made the frontal array terrific by the force of regular service. By the time this was done, the infuriated lord came there. Clad in hides he had the lustre of a thousand fiery suns at the end of a Kalpa.

42. On seeing lord Śiva arrived after the lapse of a thousand years, the delighted women in the company of Vīraka fought a very great battle.

43-44. Pārvatī bowed her head to Śiva. She exhibited great valour to her lord. The delighted Pārvatī fought

a terrific battle. Śiva embraced her and then entered the cavern. The numerous women that had gathered were dismissed. Pārvatī honoured Vīraka by hundreds of gifts and appointed him as the keeper of the gate.

45. Then the Asura chief, very clever in statesmanship, unable to see either Pārvatī or Śiva sent his emissary Vighasa immediately to Śiva.

46. He was one whose limbs were shattered by the weapons hurled by the gods and the Gaṇas. He entered the cavern, bowed to Śiva and spoke these words haughtily.

The messenger said:—

47. "I have been sent by him and so I have entered this cavern. You have nothing to do with a woman. Surrender this young and beautiful lady.

48. Usually you are an ascetic. Carry on that. Thinking "Should a sage be offended?" I have observed forbearance within my tender mind. But O sage, you are not a real ascetic but only my enemy.

49. You are extremely inimical to the Daityas. Show your might in fighting with me. O wicked ascetic, I shall send you to Yama's abode befitting the nether worlds."

Sanatkumāra said:—

50. On hearing these words conveyed by the emissary, the great three-eyed lord, the goal of the good, the destroyer of the pride of the wicked, the wearer of skull-garlands spoke furiously burning with grief.

Śiva said:—

51. Manifestly your words are fierce. Hence hasten. Fight with me if you have the might.

52. Of what avail are the wives and riches, be they ever so beautiful, to a feeble man in the world? Let the haughty Daityas proud of their strength come. I have already thought of this and acted accordingly.

53. How can a feeble man maintain even his physical body? Let them do whatever they are ordained to do. I

shall also do whatever I have to do. There is no doubt in this.

CHAPTER FORTYSIX

(*Andhaka fights*)

Sanatkumāra said:—

1-2. The king of Daityas, skilled in interpreting what he hinted at, seized his mace and hastened along with his army to the entrance of the cavern. The terrible demon Gila who could not be overwhelmed even by the foremost among the gods, was placed ahead. After reaching the cavern of the lord Śiva, the Daitya attacked with his weapons as refulgent as thunderbolt. The others showered weapons on Vīraka and yet others on Pārvatī, the daughter of the mountain.

3-8. Some smashed the beautiful entrance, some destroyed the flowers, leaves, fruits and roots, the hearty water sheds and the garden paths. A few stirred up joyously the sunny peaks of the mountain. Then Śiva collected his army. The infuriated trident-bearing deity called them together, the terrible living beings, the gods with their armies including Viṣṇu and others. Immediately after being called, the gods came to Śiva and stood near him with palms joined in reverence. They came with chariots, elephants, horses, bulls, cows, camels, mules, excellent birds, lions, bhūtas, tigers, deer, boars, Sārasa birds, fishes, crocodiles, other living beings, scattered flies, serpents rending cremation grounds along with ghosts and spirits, divine chariots, lakes, rivers and mountains.

9 When the gods had taken adequate rest along with their vehicles, the trident-bearing lord Śiva sent them to the battle ground with the steady and chief resolve on victory.

10. They fought with the army of the lord of Daityas including Gila terribly and unrestrainedly as if the end of

Yugas had come but they were all devoured in the battle-field angrily.

11. In a trice all of them including Brahmā, Indra, Viṣṇu, the sun and the moon were swallowed by Vighasa When the armies were devoured, only Vīraka was left behind.

12. Leaving off the battle front Vīraka entered the cavern, bowed to Śiva. The eloquent but distressed Vīraka then acquainted the destroyer of Kāma with all the details.

13. O lord, your army has been devoured by the Daitya Vighasa. Viṣṇu, the preceptor and elder to the three worlds and the destroyer of Daityas, has been devoured. The moon and the sun, Brahmā and Indra, the bestowers of boons, have been devoured. All these, Yama, Varuṇa, Vāyu and Kubera have been devoured.

14. I, the humble one, alone am left behind. What is it that I have to do now? The lord of Daityas along with the Daityas is invincible and hence rejoiced.

15. Viṣṇu the lord who became invincible after tearing off Hiraṇyakaśipu the son of Kaśyapa with his claws, had the speed of wind and a terrifying demeanour. He opened his mouth wide and began to blow of the three worlds although the lord was subservient to the good.

16. When the matter stood thus, he was cursed by the seven sages,[304] the virtual lords of the worlds—"You will be crushed by the Daityas for a long time."

17-18. Then they were requested by Viṣṇu through loving words conducive to his benefit—"O great sages, when will I get rid of this terrible curse?" Thereupon the infuriated sages said—"At the time of war you will be hit with fists and struck with terrible arrows. When swallowed by Vighasa with wide open mouth, you shall stabilise yourself in the Badarī forest[305] in the holy residence of Śiva, the cavern and shall then be freed from sins." Thereafter in accordance with the curse of the sages he roams everyday in the battle ground, very hungry and swallows the Daityas and becomes delighted.

19-20. By using the science of reviving the dead to

304. See Note 164 P. 163.
305. See Note 242 P. 927.

life and chanting verses of hymns, Śukra revives the Daityas killed by the gods, with full vigour and joy and cures them of their hundreds of wounds. It would rather be better to give upour lives at the battle than yield. You, the witness of everything, have been chosen by us as the guide in the accomplishment of our task.

Sanatkumāra said:—

21. On hearing this from his excellent son, the lord of Pramathas, the lord of the three worlds meditated for a long time. He performed an incomparable miracle by chanting Sāman songs.[306] He laughed assuming a body as resplendent as the sun and thereby dispelled the darkness.

22-24. When the light spread, the sage Vīraka fought again with the Daityas of deformed features. He who was created by the excellent sage after swallowing powdered rock and who had fought the battle and even conquered the Pura Asura previously was immediately swallowed by the Daitya together with Nandin who carried sharp arrows, spear and swords, who was the chief of warriors and hundreds of excellent sages, the great receptacle of lores, possessed of mental and physical restraint and great courage. On seeing this, lord Śiva got on to his bull and faced the Daitya Vighasa. Repeating the divine Mantra that compels the disgorging of what is swallowed, he stood there keeping the bow in readiness and the arrows as powerful as thunderbolts.

25. Then the sage Vīraka came out of the mouth of Vighasa accompanied by Viṣṇu and his army. The lotus born Brahmā, Indra—the enemy of Bala, the moon and the sun were also disgorged. Thus disgorged the delighted army fought a great battle again.

26. Thus the army of the Daityas was conquered. But Śukra revived the Daityas slain in the battle by the virtue of his science. The preceptor of Dānavas was then bound like an animal and brought by the Gaṇas before lord Śiva, the destroyer of Tripuras, who swallowed him.

27-28. When Śukra was no more, the entire residence

306. A particular kind of Sacred verse intended to be sung is called Sāmaveda.

of the Dānavas was shattered and destroyed. Everything was suppressed by the gods. When the battle ground was strewn with plenty of Bhūtas who eagerly devoured mouthfuls of the corpses of the Daityas, with headless trunks dancing holding sharp arrows and spears in their hands, with intoxicated Vetālas, with birds of firm claws and beaks and with wolves their jaws filled with dead bodies, the founder of the family Hiraṇyakaśipu fought the battle for a long time and was defeated by Viṣṇu, Śiva and Indra.

29. When the exhausted army entered the nether worlds, nooks and corners in hills and seas, Andhaka the foremost of the Daityas who in his height of fury had harassed the gods and who could split the universe was divested of his haughtiness by Viṣṇu by terrible blows from his mace.

30. Since he had secured boons he did not leave the battle ground although his body had been afflicted much by the lord of the gods by terrible blows and hits. Then by means of weapons and missiles, trees, mountains and waters he defeated the gods. Then he challenged the lord of Pramathas roaring loudly.

31. Fighting steadily by means of various weapons that fell on the battle ground, they were exhausted. Then the Asura inflicted pain on Pārvatī and Śiva by means of uprooted trees, serpents, thunderbolts and other weapons and by indulging in deceptive practices.

32. In order to conquer Śiva, the Daitya of as great strength and intelligence as the destroyer of Tripuras, created another juggler, a cheat. The Daitya whose madness had helplessly been aggravated by hundreds of boons, could not be killed by the gods, though his body had been shattered by plenty of weapons and missiles.

33. Many Andhakas originating from the exudations of his body, with hideous faces resembling his, pervaded the surface of the earth. He was terribly pierced with the Trident by Śiva, the enemy of the Tripuras, the lord of Bhūtas whose body blazed like fire at the end of a Kalpa.

34. When fresh army cropped up from the army slain by Śiva from the hot drops of blood and cut pieces of flesh from the wounds of those killed, Viṣṇu called away the

lord of Pramathas and intelligently assumed a fierce form of a hideous woman employing his Yogic knowledge.

35. It had a very terrible and hard aspect characterised by several arms. Angrily the lord Viṣṇu projected from the wings of the army and stood ahead of the Gaṇas.

36. The goddess stood high in the battle field covering up the entire ground by her pair of feet. She was eulogised by the gods. Induced by the lord, the hungry female form devoured the army, drank the hot blood of the Daityas and made the battle ground marshy.

37. Then, only the chief of the Daityas was left. Still he fought on with Śiva, beating terribly with his palms, knees, legs, nails, face, arms and head. Although his blood had been sucked dry he remembered the traditional heroism of his race.[307]

38. Afterwards he was quietened by the lord of Pramathas. His heart was pierced. He was staked to the trident. He was held aloft in the sky like a long pole. Half of his body, the lower one, was dried up by the rays of the sun. The other half was drenched by clouds attended with gusts of wind and heavy downpour. His body was subjected to all sorts of torture.

39. Shattered and scattered like flakes of snow in the rays of the sun, his limbs were torn asunder. Yet the foremost of the Daityas did not die. He eulogised Śiva. The delighted Śiva, ocean of great mercy, joyously gave him the position of the chieftain of his Gaṇas.

40. The lords of the worlds worshipped the lord of Pramathas, at the end of war, with different hymns pleasing and significant. Viṣṇu, Brahmā and others too eulogised him with stooping shoulders. They were delighted and happy and shouted cries of victory.

41. Śiva spent the time rejoicingly in the mountain cavern in their company. Honouring the great and excellent mountains by the bestowal of gifts he dismissed a few of his Aṁśas (parts). Regaining the delighted daughter of the lord

307. The Asuras followed the traditions of the warrior class which they inherited from their ancestry. Thus they belonged to the Kṣātra division of the fourfold Aryan society.

of mountains and the sinless son from the terrible jaw of Vighasa, he sported.

CHAPTER FORTYSEVEN

(*Description of swallowing Śukra*)

Vyāsa said:—

1-2. This has been succinctly heard by me that in the great terrible battle that caused horripilation, Śukra the wise lord of the Daityas was swallowed by Śiva, the enemy of the Tripuras. Please narrate in detail what that great Yogin, stationed in the stomach of the trident-bearing lord Śiva did.

3-4. How was it that the gastric fire of Śiva, that terrible fire of dissolution at the end of Kalpa did not burn Śukra? How did the intelligent Śukra of bright refulgence, come out of the stomach of Śiva. How long and in what manner did Śukra propitiate him ?

5. How did he obtain that great knowledge that suppresses death ? O dear one, what is that knowledge which prevents death.

6. O sage, how did Andhaka get the position of the chieftain of Gaṇas after being released from the trident of Śiva, the lord of the gods, indulging in divine sports.

7. O highly intelligent one, please be merciful. Mention all these sweet sports entirely to me who listen with attention.

Brahmā said:—

8. On hearing these words of Vyāsa of immeasurable refulgence, Sanatkumāra remembered the lotus-like feet of Śiva and said.

Sanatkumāra said:—

9. O Vyāsa of great intellect, listen to the nectar-like sport of Śiva. You are the foremost of devotees of Śiva and you delight me.

10-11. When the battle began between Śiva and Andhaka, the leaders who had formed their armies in the unpiercing arrays of thunderbolt and the mountain, the powerful Daityas became victorious at first but O sage, by the power of Śiva, the Pramathas became victorious afterwards.

12. On hearing that the Asura Andhaka was dejected. He began to think "How can I be victorious ?"

13. Going away from the battle ground the heroic and intelligent Andhaka went immediately to Śukra, unattended by anyone else.

14. Getting down from his chariot, he bowed to his preceptor. He was foremost among the politicians, pondered well and spoke with palms joined in reverence.

Andhaka said:—

15. O holy lord, after resorting to you we feel the respect due to a preceptor towards you. We are never vanquished. We are always victorious.

16. Due to our power we consider all the gods and their followers including Śiva and Viṣṇu as insignificant as the useless blades of grass.

17. Due to your blessings, the gods are afraid of us as the elephants of the lions and the serpents of Garuḍas.

18. By smashing the entire host of the Pramathas, by your grace, the Daityas and the Dānavas have entered the impenetrable thunderbolt Vyūha.

19. O Bhārgava, by seeking refuge in you we roam about unhesitatingly in the battle ground, like the cows grazing in the field fearlessly.

20. But now the Asuras are harassed by the heroic enemy. They are killed. Save, save us O, Brahmin, who have sought refuge in you.

21. See Huṇḍa and others, leading lieutenants of mine who have been slain or who have fallen. They have been attacked by Pramathas of terrible valour who can destroy even death.

22. Formerly you did a great penance drinking the smoke of husks or eating bits of grain[306] for a thousand years

306. Kaṇadhūma is a kind of penance wherein the performer sustains himself on the grains of corn or balls of iron-ash (lohagulika).

and secured a great lore. Now the opportunity has arrived to put it to a practical use.

23. O Bhārgava, let all the Pramathas see the fruit of your lore as you will kindly resuscitate the Asuras by that lore.

Sanatkumāra said:—

24. On hearing the words of Andhaka, the perplexed Bhārgava began to reflect sadly.

25. "What shall I do ? What will benefit me ? Any living being has various activities to be performed. It may seem improper to me.

26. This Vidyā has been derived from Śiva and I am going to use it on the heroes suppressed by the heroic Pramathas, the followers of Śiva.

27. It is my duty to protect those who seek refuge in me." After thinking like this, the proposal of Andhaka was accepted by Śukra.

28. Smiling slightly and thinking upon the lotus like feet of Śiva with a peaceful mind, Bhārgava spoke to the ruler of Dānavas.

Śukra said:—

29. O dear, what has been mentioned by you is entirely true. I have acquired this lore just for the welfare of the Dānavas.

30. Drinking the unbearable smoke of husks or eating bits of grains for a thousand years, this lore has been acquired from Śiva. It is pleasing and beneficent to you my kinsmen.

31. With this lore, I shall revive the Daityas destroyed in the battle by the Pramathas just like the cloud that revives scorched plants.

32. Within a Muhūrta you will see these Daityas as if waking from sleep, healed from wounds, devoid of pain and very healthy.

Sanatkumāra said:—

33. After saying this to Andhaka, Śukra repeated the

mantra once for each of the Daityas after thinking upon lord Śiva.

34. As soon as the mantra was repeated, the Daityas and Dānavas rose up simultaneously as if from sleep, with the weapons lifted in their hands.

35. They rose up like the merit of men who give water to the thirsty during the fight or like charity given to brahmins at the time of distress in the spirit of faith.

36. On seeing Huṇda and other Asuras revived to life, the Asuras shouted loudly like clouds laden with water.

37. Roaring with awful sounds the fearless valorous Asuras got ready to fight with Pramathas.

38. On seeing the Daityas and Dānavas resuscitated to life by Śukra , Nandin and other Pramathas, very haughty and invincible were surprised.

39. After pondering intelligently they consulted one another—"This activity shall be mentioned to Śiva the lord of gods".

40. When the sacrifice of war was going on like that, kindling the surprise of the leading Pramathas, Nandin, the son of Śilāda who was infuriated on seeing the work of Bhārgava approached lord Śiva.

41-42. After saying "Be victorious" to Śiva, the cause of victory and golden-complexioned, Nandin said—"O lord, the warlike activities of leading Gaṇas, which are difficult even for the gods including Indra, to perform, have been rendered futile by Bhārgava. O lord, after repeating the lore that revives the dead to life, one for each, all the dead enemies have been playfully resuscitated.

43. The great Asuras, viz., Tuhuṇḍa, Huṇḍa, Kumbha, Jambha, Vipāka, Pāka and others have returned from Yama's abode. They are routing the Pramathas and are roaming about.

44. O lord Śiva, how can we be victorious if he were to revive to life all the Daityas killed by us, again and again? How can there be peace to the leading Gaṇas?

Sanatkumāra said:—

45. On being thus addressed by the leading Pramatha,

Nandin, the lord of leading Pramathas laughingly spoke to Nandin, the chief of all lords of Gaṇas.

Śiva said:—

46. O Nandin, go very quickly and seize that great brahmin from the midst of the Daityas and bring him here like a vulture bringing the bird quail.

Sanatkumāra said:—

47. Thus commanded by the bull-bannered deity Nandin bellowed like a bull and roared like a lion. Moving fast through the army he reached the place where the bright scion of the family of Bhārgavas was sitting.

48. Harassing and exciting the Daityas, Nandin snatched off Śukra well guarded by all the Daityas who had in their hands, nooses, swords trees, boulders and mountains, like the mythological animal Śarabha snatching off an elephant.

49. The demons followed him roaring like lions to get him released even as his cloth became loose, his ornaments fell off and his tuft of hair got untied as he was caught tightly by the strong Nandin.

50. The leading Dānavas showered on Nandīśvara, thunderbolts, spears, swords, axes, staffs, discus and other missiles like clouds making a fierce downpour.

51. When the combat between the Asuras and gods deepened, the chief of Gaṇas burnt hundreds of the weapons of the enemy by the fire originating from his mouth and reached Śiva taking Bhārgava with him.

52. "O lord, here is Bhārgava", saying this he handed him over to Śiva immediately. The lord of gods caught hold of Bhārgava like a present offered by a devotee.

53. Without saying anything, the protector of the Bhūtas, thrust Bhārgava into his mouth like a fruit. The Asuras shouted loudly "Alas ! Alas."

CHAPTER FORTYEIGHT

(*Swallowing of Śukra*)

Vyāsa said:—

1. O Great sage, when Bhārgava was swallowed by Rudra what did the heroic Dānavas headed by Andhaka, do? Please narrate.

Sanatkumāra said:—

2. When Bhārgava was swallowed by the lord of Pārvatī, the Daityas gave up hopes of victory, like lordly elephants bereft of trunks or cows and bulls devoid of horns.

3. They were as futile as headless trunks, as brahmins who have forsaken the study of the Vedas, as the living beings who have given up efforts and as the efforts of those who are not favoured by good fortune.

4. They were lustreless and ineffectual like women devoid of husbands, like the arrows devoid of feather, like longevity devoid of meritorious actions and like learning in the Vedas without the observance of sacred rites.

5. They were as powerless as innumerable activities rendered fruitless without the support of wealth, or as Kṣatriyas devoid of heroism or as the assemblage of virtue without truth.

6. When Bhārgava was taken away by Nandin and swallowed by Śiva as he had swallowed poison, the Daityas became grief-stricken and their pride and jubilation for battle became curbed.

7. On seeing Tuhuṇḍa, Huṇḍa and other Daityas, devoid of enthusiasm, the courageous and valorous Andhaka replied.

Andhaka said :—

8. By seizing Bhārgava forcibly from our midst we have been duped by Nandin. Our bodies have been rendered lifeless.

9. With the taking away of Bhārgava from us, our

courage, valour, achievement, fame, strength, splendour and exploit have been simultaneously taken away.

10. Fie upon us by whom the sole and excellent preceptor of the family worthy of the respect of the whole race, the virtual protector of all of us and very efficient, has not been saved at the time of adversity.

11. Hence do not waste time. Fight with the enemy, the heroic Pramathas, after remembering the lotus-like feet of the preceptor.

12. After remembering the beneficent lotus-like feet of the preceptor, I shall slay all the Pramathas along with Nandin.

13. After killing these along with the gods including Indra I shall obtain the release of Bhārgava like the Yogin who releases the soul from the bondage of action.

14. Bhārgava too is a lordly Yogin. If he himself comes out of Śiva's body, the rest of us are saved.

Sanatkumāra said:—

15. On hearing the words of Andhaka, the powerful Dānavas, fearlessly roaring like the rumbling clouds, spoke after resolving to do what was then tō be thought of.

The Dānavas said:—

16. If we are destined to live, the Pramathas cannot overwhelm us. If it is otherwise what avails running from the battle ground leaving our master behind.

17. Those who leave their masters and run away professing to be honoured and desiring to be rich will surely fall into hell Andhatāmisra.

18. After sullying their fame with the darkness of ignominy they will forfeit their pleasure both here and hereafter. They will be slain in the battle.

19. Of what avail are charitable gifts, austerities and dips in holy waters if one takes bath in the holy tract of the battlefield that removes the dirt of re-birth?

Sanatkumāra said:—

20. After saying these words and deciding in accordance

with them, those Daityas and Dānavas pounded the Pramathas in the battle. They sounded the war-drums.

21-22. By means of arrows, swords, thunderbolts, hard rocks, Bhuśuṇḍis, Bhindipālas and other missiles, spears, javelins, axes, skull-headed clubs, tridents, maces, staffs and other weapons they bit one another and wrought a great havoc.

23. There was a great noise everywhere, produced by the drawn bows, flying arrows, the missiles, Bhuśuṇḍis, Bhindipālas and leonine roars.

24. There was great tumult caused by the war drums, trumpets, the trumpeting sounds of elephants and the neighing sounds of the horses.

25. The vast space between heaven and earth was filled with loud reports causing horripilations to the courageous as well as the cowardly.

26-27. The thirsty armies on either side fainted with their ears bursting by the loud sounds of elephants and horses, with the flagstaff and banners broken and torn, with their weapons exhausted, vomitting diverse kinds of blood and bereft of horses, elephants and chariots.

28. O sage, the heroic Nandin and other Pramathas slew all Asuras and won the victory.

29. On seeing his army being shattered here and there Andhaka rushed at the Gaṇas driving in his chariot.

30. Like the mountains hit with the thunderbolt by Indra, the Pramathas perished. Like the clouds devoid of water they sank low.

31. Glancing at the in-coming or out-going Pramathas, far off or at close quarters, Andhaka hit them severally with as many arrows as the hair on their bodies.

32-33. On seeing the army shattered and smashed by the powerful Andhaka, Skanda, Vināyaka, Nandin, Somanandin and other heroic and powerful Pramathas, and Śiva's personal Gaṇas became furious and fought in diverse ways and very valorously.

34-35. By Vināyaka, Skanda, Nandin, Somanandin, Vīraka, Naigameya, the powerful Vaiśākha and other terrible Gaṇas, Andhaka was rendered blind as they showered tridents, spears and arrows incessantly.

36-37. Then a great tumult arose in the midst of the armies of Pramathas and Asuras. At that great noise, Bhārgava who was within the belly of Śiva began to wander seeking an outlet like the unaboded wind. In Śiva's body he observed seven worlds[309] including Pātāla.

38. He saw the diverse worlds of Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Indra, Āditya and celestial damsels as well as the battle between the Pramathas and Asuras.

39. Wandering round and round in the belly of Śiva for a hundred years he failed to see any outlet as a wicked person fails to see a vulnerable point in a good person.

40-41 Taking recourse to the Yoga of Śiva he repeated the following mantra and assumed the form of Śiva's semen. He thus emerged out of the belly of Śiva through his penis. Thereafter he bowed to Śiva and was accepted as a son by Pārvatī. He was made a lord of the Gaṇas.

42. On seeing Bhārgava come out of the path of the semen, lord Śiva, the storehouse of mercy, laughed and said.

Lord Śiva said:—

43. O son of Bhṛgu, since you came out of my penis in the form of the semen you will be called Śukra henceforth. I accept you as my son. You may go if you please.

Sanatkumāra said:—

44. Thus advised by the lord, Śukra who had the refulgence of the sun, bowed to Śiva again and eulogised him with palms joined in reverence.

Śukra said:—

45. You are of infinite feet, of infinite forms and of infinite heads, the destroyer and the auspicious. You are of infinite arms. How can I eulogise you of such form adequately? You are worthy of eulogy and of the bowing of our heads.

309. The seven regions below the earth are called अतल, वितल, सुतल, रसातल, तल, तलातल and पाताल । Cp. Umā S. ch. 15 V. 22-23.

46. You are the eight-formed,[310] the infinite-formed, the bestower of the desires of all gods and Asuras. You are the wicked and the undesirable. How can I adequately eulogise you of such a nature?

Sanatkumāra said :—

47. After eulogising Śiva thus and bowing to him again, Śukra took leave of Śiva and entered the army of the Dānavas as the moon does the cluster of clouds.

48. Thus I have narrated to you how Bhārgava was swallowed by Śiva. Now listen to the mantra which was repeated by Bhārgava from within the belly of Śiva.

CHAPTER FORTYNINE

(*The acquisition of the position of a Gaṇa by Andhaka*)

Sanatkumāra said:—

Om obeisance to you, the lord of the gods, the one bowed to by the gods and Asuras, the great lord of the beings past and future, the one of green and tawny-coloured eyes, the strength, the intellect-formed, the one having the tiger hide as his covering cloth, the one springing from the flint sticks of sacred fire, the lord of the three worlds, Īśvara, Hara, the bay-eyed, the cause of the dissolution of the Yugas, the fire, the lord of Gaṇas, the protector of the worlds, the one of great arms, of great hands, the trident-bearing, of great fangs, the Kāla, Maheśvara, the imperishable, the Time-formed, the blue-necked, the one of huge belly, the presiding deity of Gaṇas, the soul of all, the purifier of all, the all-pervading, the destroyer of the death, the one observing sacred rites on the Pāriyātra[311] mountain, the Brahmacārin, the one knowable through Vedānta, the one reaching the limits of austerities, Paśupati, the bodiless, the one armed with trident, the bull-bannered, Hari, the one with matted

310. For the eight forms of Śiva, see Note No. 83 P. 1321
311. For Pāriyātra or Pāripātra, see Note 77 P. 629

hair, the tufted, the staff-bearing, the one of great fame, the lord of Bhūtas, the dweller in a mountain-cave, the one beating time to Vīṇā and Paṇava, the deathless, the comely, the one like the early morning sun, the dweller in the cremation ground, the lord consort of Pārvatī, the suppressor of enemies, the one who felled the eyes of Bhaga, the one who broke the tooth of Pūṣan, the one who cuts the cruel ones, the one armed with noose, the hour of dissolution, the meteor-mouthed, the fire-bannered, the sage, the blazing, the lord of subjects, the leader, the father, the fourth one, the most excellent one in the world, Vāmadeva, the chivalrous in speech, the Bhikṣu of the left wing, the Bhikṣu-formed, the one with matted hair, the complicated, the one who benumbed the hand of Indra, the one who benumbed the Vasus, the sacrifice, the performer of sacrifice, Kāla, the intelligent, the bee, the moving one, the one originating from the hedges of the trees, the one adored by the name Vājasana by the people of all stages of life, the creator of the universe, the sustainer of the universe, the eternal Puruṣa, the stable one, the presiding deity of Dharma, the one of three-fold paths, the conceiver of all living beings, the three-eyed, the multi-formed, the one as refulgent as ten thousand suns, the lord, the one sounding all musical instruments, the one who releases from all hindrances, the binding one, the supporter of all, the most excellent of all virtuous ones, the Puṣpadanta, the part, the face, the destroyer of all, the golden-eared, the deity at the door, the terrible, the one of terrible exploit, Om, Obeisance, Obeisance.

Sanatkumāra said:—

1. It is by repeating this mantra that Śukra came out of the belly of Śiva through the penis, like the powerful semen.

2. He was accepted as son by Pārvatī and made unaging and undying by Śiva, the lord of the universe, as glorious as himself and second to him.

3. Śukra the sage, the storehouse of the Vedas, was reborn of lord Śiva when three thousand years elapsed on the earth

4. He saw Andhaka the lord of Dānavas, staked to the trident, performing a penance courageously and meditating on the supreme lord. He was completely dried up.

5-18. He was meditating on the hundred and eight forms of the great Ātman as follows:—the great god, of misformed eyes, the moon-crested, the nectarlike, the permanent, the stable, the blue-necked, the trident-bearing, the bull-eyed, the great unknowable, the Puruṣa, the bestower of all desires, the enemy of Kāma, the destroyer of Kāma, assuming forms at his will, wearing matted hair, the hideous, the Giriśa, the terrible, long-lipped, the red-robed, the Yogin, the destroyer of Kāla, the destroyer of Tripuras, the bearer of skull, the performer of secret rites, the one of secret formulas, the grave, the conceivable, the support of Aṇimā and other qualities, the bestower of riches to the three worlds, the heroic, the destroyer of the heroes, the terrible, the awful, the fleshy, the clever, the consumer of great flesh, the mad, the awful, the great Īśvara, the router of the three worlds, the miserly, the hunter, the destroyer of sacrifice, the one with Kārttikeya, the highly elated, clad in elephant's hide, covered with hide, the agitated, wearing serpents as ornaments, the lender of support, the spirit, the heroic, worshipped by Śākinī, the Aghora (the gentle), the destroyer of terrible Daityas, sounding awfully, the vegetation-formed, smearing ashes on the body, with matted hair, the pure, served by hundreds of Bheruṇḍas, the lord of Bhūtas, the ruler of Bhūtas, the refuge of the five elements, the sky-sojourning, the furious, the ruthless, the fierce, the lord of Caṇḍī, the beloved of Caṇḍikā, the fearful, the lofty, the Garutmān (the winged one), the permanent, the partaker of spirituous liquor, the serpent-formed, the extremely terrible, the death, deathless, death of death, of great army, residing in the forest of the cremation ground, the attached, the unattached, blind with passion, adored by hundreds of passionless devotees, possessed of the Sattva, Rajas, Tamas attributes, as also of the Dharma, and Adharma, younger brother of Indra, the truth, the untruth, the existent, the non-existent, the uncaused, the lord with half-female form, the sun, as refulgent as crores and hundreds of suns, the sacrifice, the lord of sacrifice,

Rudra, Īśāna, the bestower of boons and Śiva. The Dānava Andhaka meditating on these hundred and eight forms of the supreme soul became free from that great fear.

19. He was drenched with the divine shower of nectar by lord Śiva who was perfectly satisfied. He was brought from the top of the trident and released.

20. He spoke to the Asura Andhaka, the great Daitya. The great lord forgave what the demon had done before.

The great lord said:—

21. O lord of Daityas, I am pleased by your restraints and observances, your valour and courage. O you of good rites, choose a boon.

22. Propitiated by you I grant the boons. Free from sins you deserve a boon, O excellent Daitya.

23. For the merits you have acquired by retaining your life for three thousand years you shall attain happiness.

Sanatkumāra said:—

24. On hearing this, Andhaka joined his palms in reverence. He knelt on the ground and spoke to the lord consort of Pārvatī trembling with awe.

Andhaka said:—

25-26. O lord, what you had been told by me before was done with the words choked by excess of pleasure. You the greater than the greatest were addressed as an ordinary poor person. What had been done by me in the battlefield due to delusion was the most despicable in the world. It was because I did not realise you then. O lord, please do not keep that in mind.

27. O great lord, the wicked thing I committed towards Pārvatī was due to my base lust. It may kindly be forgiven. I am the most miserable and unhappy.

28. A miserable person shall be pitied. If he be in a pitiable plight, he shall be all the more treated kindly. I am miserable but always devoted to you.

29. I am miserable and devoted. I have sought

refuge in you. I shall be saved. I have joined my palms in reverence.

30. May this goddess, the mother of the universe, be pleased with me. Let her leave off her anger entirely and glance at me delightedly.

31. O moon-crested lord, where is her anger and where am I a pitiable Daitya? O crescent-crested lord, O Śiva, O supreme lord, I cannot bear it.

32. Where are you, the most liberal? Where am I the wretched, rendered helpless by passion, fury and faults by old age and death?

33. Let not your son Vīraka, a powerful fighter and warrior, be angry on seeing me the miserable creature.

34. Let me see Pārvatī always as mother with reverence due to elders, O lord who are as white as snow, necklace, moon, conch and the Kunda flower.

35. Let me be always devoted to you both. Let me be free from enmity towards the gods. Let me be calm in heart and think of Yogic ways. Let me thus stay with your Gaṇas.

36. Let me not remember again the adverse qualities of the Dānavas, thanks to your mercy, O lord. Please grant me this excellent boon.

Sanatkumāra said:—

37. After saying this, the lord of the Daityas became quiet meditating on the three-eyed lord and seeing Pārvatī as mother.

38. Then glanced at by Śiva, with delighted eyes, he remembered the entire story of his previous wonderful birth.

39. When he remembered the incident his ambition was fulfilled. Bowing to his mother and father—Śiva and Pārvatī—he became contented.

40. He was kissed and sniffed on the head by Pārvatī and Śiva. From the crescent-crested lord Śiva he secured everything he desired.

41. Thus I have narrated to you everything connected with the early story of Andhaka and his acquisition of the

lordship of Gaṇas by lord Śiva's grace, yielding the greatest happiness.

42. The mantra of Mṛtyuñjaya that bestows immortality has also been mentioned to you. It yields the fruits of cherished desire. It should be strenuously read and recited.

CHAPTER FIFTY

(*Śukra learns Mṛtasañjīvanī lore*)

Sanatkumāra said:—

1. O Vyāsa, listen how the lore of warding off death was gained by the sage Bhārgava from Śiva who is called the conqueror of Death.

2. At first this scion of the family of Bhṛgu went to the city of Vārānasī[312] and performed penance for a long time meditating on lord Viśveśvara.

3. There itself he fixed a phallic emblem of Śiva, the great Ātman. O Vedavyāsa, in front of it, he dug a very beautiful well.

4. Assiduously he performed the ablutions of the lord of the gods for a hundred thousand times with Pañcāmṛta[313] using a Droṇa measure each time. Fragrant unguents he also used with them for the ablutions.

5. He offered sandal-paste and Yakṣakardama[314] to the lord of the gods, thousands of times. Gladly he smeared fragrant unguents on the phallic image.

6-11. With care and devotion he offered flowers and leaves in the course of his worship—Rāja Campaka, Dhattūra, Karavīra, Kuśeśaya, Mālatī Karṇikāra, Kadamba, Bakula, Utpala, Mallikā, Śatapatrī, Sindhuvāra, Kiṁśuka, Bandhūka, Punnāga, Nāgakesara, Keśara, Navamallī, Cibilaka, Kunda, Mucukunda, Mandāra, Bilva leaves,

312. Vārāṇasī—ancient Kāśī. It came to be so called because it was situated between the two rivers, Barnā and Asi.

313. See Note 95 P. 136.

314. It is an ointment or perfumed paste consisting of camphor, agallochum, musk, sandal wood and kakkola.

Droṇa, Maruvaka, Vṛka, Granthiparṇa, Damanaka, the beautiful mango sprouts, Tulasī leaves, Devagandhārī leaves, Bṛhatpatrī leaves, Darbha grass, Nandyāvartas, Agastyas, Śāla, Devadāru, Kāñcanāra, Kuravaka, Dūrvā grass, Kuruṇṭaka, and lotus petals of various auspicious kinds.

12. He eulogised Śiva with various hymns and repeated a thousand names. He sang songs of Śiva's glory. He danced and made offerings.

13. Śukra worshipped lord Śiva in various ways for five thousand years.

14. When he did not see the lord, the least inclined to grant the boon, he took up still more unbearable and terrible observances and restraints.

15-16. He washed off the dirt of fickleness from his mind by the waters of pure conceptions many times as well as from the sense-organs. After purifying the gem of the mind, he offered the same to the trident-bearing lord. He drank the smoke of powdered husks or bits of grains or balls of iron-ash[315] for a thousand years.

17. On seeing him performing the terrible penance thus by keeping the mind steady, lord Śiva was delighted.

18. Coming out of the phallic image, lord Śiva the consort of Dākṣāyaṇī appeared before him with a brighter refulgence than that of a thousand suns and said.

Lord Śiva said:—

19. "O great sage, O son of Bhṛgu, O fortunate saint, by your perpetual penance I have been delighted.

20. O Bhārgava, choose anything that you wish as your boon. I shall lovingly bestow on you all your desires. There is nothing that cannot be granted to you."

Sanatkumāra said:—

21 On hearing these pleasing words of Śiva, Bhārgava was very much delighted. He was immersed in the ocean of happiness.

22. The brahmin bowed to Śiva with his eyes

315. See Note 308 P. 1008.

blooming like a lotus with pleasure and his body excited with horripilation by the surging waves of joy.

23. With the palms raised and joined on the head in reverence and repeating "Victory, Victory", the delighted sage eulogised the eight-formed[316] Śiva with the blooming eyes.

Bhārgava said:—

24. O lord of the universe, Obeisance to you. O jewel of heaven, you shine brilliantly in the firmament for the benefit of the three worlds. With these lustrous rays you subdue all darkness and the desires of the Asuras.

25. O eye of the world, you shine in heaven, on the earth and in the sky, brilliantly lit by your excessive refulgence. You have driven away darkness. You are filled by the nectar of the moon. Obeisance to you.

26. You are the wind, the goal in the holy path. You are worthy of being adored. O enlivener of the worlds, who can live here without you? O all-pervasive, benumber of storms, nourisher of creatures, delighter of the race of serpents, obeisance to you.

27. O sole purifier of the universe, O protector of those who bow to you, O wielder of the power of fire, you are the fire, bestowing calmness at every step. Obeisance to you.

28. O water-formed one, O great Īśa, the whole universe is holy. Really you make it variegated. O lord of the universe, this universe is free from dirt by diving into the water. Hence I bow to you.

29. O sky-formed one, because you give space within and without, that this universe evolves and expands; O merciful one, it always breathes in you and naturally merges in you Hence I bow to you.

30. O earth-formed one, O lord, you support and hold the universe. O lord of the universe, who else can be the enemy of darkness? You of this nature destroy my

316. Bhārgava eulogises Śiva in his eight forms represented by ether, air, fire, water, earth, the sun, the moon and the Ātman. The concept is popular with most of the poets in Sanskrit literature. Cp. Kāli. Śāk. Verse 1.

darkness. O you having serpents for ornaments, you are beyond all that deserve eulogy. Hence I bow to you. You are greater than the greatest.

31. O soul-formed one, O Śiva, this universe of the mobiles and immobiles is pervaded by these series of your forms. O eight-formed lord, having the form of the immanent soul, I always bow to you.

32. O kinsman of those devoid of kinsmen, O you of the form of universe, equipped with the eight forms, you make all expand. O lord, you make all objects available to those who bow to you. Hence I bow to you.

Sanatkumāra said:—

33. Eulogising the eight formed Śiva by reciting the eight verses, Bhārgava touched the ground with his head and bowed again and again.

34-35. When he was eulogised by Bhārgava of great brilliance, the great god stood up and lifted the brahmin from the ground where he was bowing to him. Holding him up, the lord spoke in a rumbling voice like that of the cloud but gentle in effect, illuminating the quarters with the moonlight-brilliance of his teeth.

The great lord said:—

36-38. O excellent brahmin, O Bhārgava, O dear, you are my faithful devotee. By your severe penance in this life, by the merit of installing my phallic image, and the adoration of it, by the offerings made with concentrated devotion, your unshaken purity and holy conduct in this Avimuktakṣetra,[317] I see you as my other two sons. There is nothing which cannot be given to you.

39. With this body you shall enter the cavity of my belly and you will be born as my son through my excellent organ—the penis.

40. I am giving you now the boon inaccessible to even my attendants and which I have kept away even from Viṣṇu and Brahmā usually.

317. The Avimukta-Kṣetra is the same as Vārāṇasī region. It derives its name from the installation of the phallic emblem of Śiva called Avimukteśvara.

41-42. O pure one, O pure sage, I am giving unto you the lore in the form of Mantra, which is called Mṛtasañjīvanī. It is pure and it has been formulated by me alone through the power of the penance. You have the capacity to receive that lore.

43. Whoever he may be if you were to repeat this mantra in respect of anyone he will truly return to life. This lore is the most excellent one.

44. Your brilliant stellar lustre will excel the sun and fire. You will become the foremost of the planets.

45. If any man or woman were to proceed on a journey in your direction, their work will perish by your glance.

46. O you of good rites, all virtuous actions like marriage etc. when performed while you rise shall be beneficent to those people.

47. All the Nandā tithis are auspicious by your conjunction. Your devotees will be prolific in progeny and profuse in the production of semen.

48. The phallic image installed by you is called Śukreśa. Those who worship it shall achieve success.

49-50. Those who perform Vratas for every night throughout the year and offer water oblations in the Śukra well on your day and worship Śukreśa shall derive these fruits. They will have semen unfailing and profuse in secretion. They will have sons.

51. They will have the good fortune of manliness. There is no doubt. Those people will have good learning and enjoy happiness.

52. After granting him boons, the lord vanished in the phallic image. The delighted Bhārgava too returned to his abode.

53. Thus O Vyāsa, I have narrated how the Mṛtyuñjaya lore was acquired by Śukra through power of penance. What else do you wish to hear?

CHAPTER FIFTYONE

(*The story of Ūṣā*)

Vyāsa said:—

1-2. O omniscient Sanatkumāra, a wonderfully excellent story has been narrated with love and blessings by you. It is full of Śiva's benediction. I wish to know more of the story of the moon-crested lord wherein he gave the Asura Bāṇa the position of the chieftain of his Gaṇas.

Sanatkumāra said:—

3. O Vyāsa, listen with reverence to the story of Śiva, the great Ātman wherein it is explained how he bestowed the chieftainship of his Gaṇas on the Asura Bāṇa.

4. Here is the good story of Śiva, the great lord. Here too is the story of Śiva's fight with Kṛṣṇa when the former blessed Bāṇa.

5. Listen from me the most befitting and the highly meritorious legend of the sports of Śiva. It is pleasing to the mind and to the ears.

6. Marīci, the sage of great intellect, was the mentally created eldest son of Brahmā. He was a Prajāpati too.

7. His son Kaśyapa was a noble soul. He was the most excellent of all sages. He made the creation flourish well. He was devoted to his father and to Brahmā.

8. O Vyāsa, thirteen daughters of Dakṣa were his wives. They were of good conduct and very faithful to their husband, the sage Kaśyapa.

9. The eldest of the wives was Diti. The Daityas were her sons. The gods and others including the mobile and immobile beings were born to others.

10. The eldest Diti had the heroic sons Hiraṇyakaśipu the elder and Hiraṇyākṣa the younger.

11. Hiraṇyakaśipu had four sons. They were in order Hrāda, Anuhrāda, Saṁhrāda and Prahlāda.

12. Prahlāda was a great devotee of Viṣṇu. He had full control of his sense-organs. The Daityas were unable to destroy him.

13. His son Virocana was the most excellent of

donors. He gave even his head to Indra who requested for the same in the guise of a brahmin.

14. His son was Bali who was a favourite of Śiva and a liberal donor. The earth was given by him to Viṣṇu who assumed the form of a dwarf.

15. His son Bāṇa became a devotee of Śiva. He was highly respected and intelligent. He was truthful and a liberal donor making thousands of charitable gifts.

16. Staying in the Śoṇita town[318] he ruled over the three worlds after defeating several rulers forcefully.

17. As a result of the grace of Śiva, the gods became the virtual servants of Bāṇa, the devotee of Śiva.

18-19. They were distressed by his enmity although he practised high virtues. In accompaniment of the instrumental music played by his thousand arms, by means of the Tāṇḍava dance he propitiated Śiva.

20. Śiva favourably disposed to his devotees was highly delighted and satisfied by his dance and he glanced at him with sympathetic eyes.

21. The lord of the worlds, worthy of being sought refuge in, the bestower of the desires of the devotees asked the great demon, the son of Bali, to choose a boon he liked.

Śiva said:—

22. The great Daitya Bāṇa, son of Bali, the foremost among the devotees and highly intelligent, bowed to lord Śiva with devotion and eulogised him.

The Asura Bāṇa said:—

23-24. O great god, lord of the gods, favourably disposed to those who seek refuge in you, O great Śiva, if you are pleased with me, be my guardian for ever. Be present with me as the lord of my city along with your sons and Gaṇas. O lord, be delightful to me in every respect.

318. Śoṇitapura was the capital of Bāṇāsura, the ruler of Tripura. Dey identifies it with the town of that name on the bank of the river Kedāra Gaṅgā (See Note 23 P. 532). Avasthi identifies it with Bānagarh in the Dinajapura district of East Bengal. The above identifications are merely tentative, for Bāna is said to have ruled in Tripuri (Mod. Tewar) on the Narmadā river in Madhya Pradeśa, far away from the locus suggested by the scholars.

Sanatkumāra said :—

25-26. Bāṇa son of Bali, deluded by Śiva's deception, did not request anything else from lord Śiva who would have bestowed even salvation if asked though he is hard to please. Śiva, who is favourably disposed to his devotees, granted boons to him and stayed there lovingly along with his sons and his Gaṇas.

27. Once Śiva performed divine sports in Śoṇita, the beautiful city of Bāṇa, in the company of the gods and Asuras, on the banks of a river.

28. The Gandharvas and the celestial damsels danced and laughed. The sages performed Japas, bowed to, worshipped and eulogised him.

29. The Pramathas jumped and shouted; the sages performed sacrifices. The groups of Siddhas came and saw the divine sport of Śiva.

30. Mlecchas,[319] adversaries and evil-intentioned wranglers perished. The mothers[320] (Brāhmī etc.) sat facing him. The terrifying imps perished.

31. The worldly faults of those who had the good conception of devotion to Śiva were forgotten.

32. The sages and the Siddhas leapt and bounced on seeing the activities of the women. The seasons displayed their power and nourished it.

33. Gentle winds blew wafting the grey pollen dust. The flocks of birds eager after honey chirped on the trees.

34. The cuckoo cooed sweetly in the forests and parks, generating love, on the branches heavily laden with flowers.

35. Then being glanced at by Kāma who was not vanquished, the crescent-crested lord Śiva highly indulgent in sports spoke to Nandin.

319. Mlecchas were wild ferocious tribes whose acts of violence caused vast devastations and destructions, struck terror in the social life of the country. They are said to have been repulsed and destroyed by lord Śiva.

320. Mātṛs are the divine mothers or personified energies of the principal deities reckoned variously as seven, eight, nine or sixteen in numbers. They are closely connected with the worship of Śiva and are described as attending on his son kārttikeya to whom at first only seven Mātṛs were assigned.

The crescent-crested Śiva said:—

36. Go quickly from this forest and tell the dark-complexioned Pārvatī everything and bring her here from Kailāsa after she has bedecked herself.

Sanatkumāra said:—

37. "So be it" answered the secret messenger of Śiva who started on journey. Reaching there, with palms joined in reverence he bowed to Pārvatī and said.

Nandīśvara said:—

38. "O goddess, the great lord of the gods wishes to see you, his beloved, well-dressed. It is at his bidding that I say this".

Sanatkumāra said:—

39. O excellent sage, then, at his importunity, Pārvatī, devoted to her husband, began to bedeck herself ardently.

40. "I am coming. You return and so inform the lord at my bidding". The Nandin approached Śiva with the velocity of mind.

41. Śiva who was extremely agitated told Nandin again. "Dear, go again and fetch Pārvatī from there".

42. "Yes, sir", said he. He went to Pārvatī of sweet appearance and said: "Your lord wishes to see you beautifully and gorgeously dressed.

43. O goddess, Śiva is eagerly waiting for various sports. O daughter of the mountain, please go since the lord is distressed with passion.".

44-46. All the celestial damsels told one another—"Since lord Śiva is very eager to see Pārvatī being passionate, the lady whom this enemy of Kāma may woo will certainly be the queen of celestial damsels. She may sport with lord Śiva in the form of Pārvatī accompanied by the Gaṇas of Kāma. Kāma is indeed victorious over his foe.

321. The printed editions read Kūṣmāṇḍa for Kumbhāṇḍa. In fact, Chitralekhā, companion of Ūṣā, was the daughter of Kumbhāṇḍa—a reputed minister of Bāṇa. Cp. Verse 38 of the next chapter.

47. If any lady, save Pārvatī, is able to touch Śiva, let her go there unhesitatingly and fascinate him.

48. The daughter of Kumbhāṇḍa,[321] Citralekhā said—"I desire to attract Śiva in the form of Pārvatī.

49. Just as Viṣṇu, by taking recourse to his yogic powers assumed the form of Enchantress (Mohinī)".

50. On seeing the change of form of Urvaśī, Ghṛtācī adopted the form of Kālī and Viśvācī that of Caṇḍikā.

51. Rambhā assumed the form of Sāvitrī, Menakā that of Gāyatrī; Sahajanyā that of Jayā and Puñjikasthalī that of Vijayā.

52. The unnamed celestial damsels assumed the forms of unnamed mothers with effort by employing their art.

53. On seeing their forms, the daughter of Kumbhāṇḍa, taking recourse to the Vaiṣṇava and her own Yoga, knew everything and emulated the same.

54. Ūṣā, daughter of the Asura Bāṇa efficient in divine Yoga, assumed the wonderfully auspicious and divine form of Pārvatī.

55. Her feet were of excellent lustre. They shone like the great red lotus. They had all the divine characteristics bestowing every desired object.

56. Knowing that she wanted to indulge in love-sport with Śiva, the omniscient and omnipresent Pārvatī spoke.

Pārvatī said—

57-59. O friend Ūṣā, chaste and honourable lady since you have adopted my form out of passion, so you will have the monthly course in the appropriate time in the Kārttika month. On the twelfth day in the bright half of Vaiśākha, you will undertake a fast. During the night while you are asleep in the harem, a man will come there and enjoy you. He has been made your husband by the gods. You will sport with him.

60. This is because you have been devoted to Viṣṇu ever since childhood without sinking into lethargy. She then mumbled to herself. "Let it be so" and was very bashful.

61. Then the goddess Pārvatī bedecked herself zealously and went to Śiva. She then sported with him.

62. O sage, at the end of the dalliance Lord Śiva vanished from the place accompanied by his wife, the Gaṇas and the gods.

CHAPTER FIFTYTWO

(The story af Ūṣā)

Sanatkumāra said:—

1. Listen to another story of Śiva the great soul which bestows the highest pleasure and wherein his endearment to his devotees can be seen.

2-3. Formerly the Asura Bāṇa had pleased Śiva by performing the Tāṇḍava dance. By adverse fate he became haughty. On realising that Śiva, the lover of Pārvatī, was delighted in mind, the Asura Bāṇa joined his palms in reverence, bent his shoulders and spoke.

Bāṇa said:—

4. O great god, lord of the gods and crest-jewel of all the gods, I am very strong, thanks to your favour.

5. A thousand hands have been given to me by you. They are only a burden to me, since except you I do not find any match to oppose me having an equal strength.

6. O bull-bannered lord, what can I do with these thousand mountain-like hands without a fight.

7. When my hands itch for war I desire to fight the elephants of the quarters. By hitting the cities and mountains I reduced them to powder. Being frightened they fled away.

8. Yama has been made a combatant with me and the great fire-god too, similarly. Varuṇa has been made a cowherd looking after my cows.

9. Kubera has been made the in-charge of couches, Nirṛti a chaperon. Indra has been defeated and forced to pay tribute.

10-11. Please suggest a fight unto me wherein my hands may fall shattered by the weapons hurled by the

enemy or cause him to fall in thousand pieces. O lord Śiva, please fulfil this desire of mine.

Sanatkumāra said:—

12. Becoming furious on hearing that, Śiva laughed boisterously and in a wonderful manner; Śiva the remover of the distress of devotees became very angry and said.

Śiva said—

13. Fie upon you, O haughty base Daitya, such a talk as this does not behove the son of Bali and a devotee.

14. Very soon, you will meet a terrible challenge to your bluff by fighting a great battle against person equal to me in strength. The battle will be sudden.

15. Therein your mountain-like hands will be cut off by weapons and missiles. They will fall off like reeds or stumps of plantain trees.

16-18. "O wicked soul, when this flagstaff of yours, with the emblem of a peacock with a human head, which is installed in your armoury, falls without being blown off by a gust of wind, you can decide within your mind that a terrible battle is at hand. Go to that terrible war accompanied by all your generals. Now return to your abode where Śiva is present.

19. O wicked one, you will see the great evil portents." After saying this, the lord who is favourably disposed to the devotees and is the dispeller of pride stopped.

Sanatkumāra said:—

20. After hearing that, Bāṇa worshiped Śiva with palms joined in reverence in the form of buds and bowed to lord Śiva. He then went to his abode.

21. On being asked, the delighted Asura mentioned everything to Kumbhāṇḍa in the manner it had happened. The Asura Bāṇa awaited the particular conjunction of circumstances eagerly.

22. Once, by chance he saw the flagstaff broken and fallen. On seeing it, he was delighted and he set out for war.

23-24. He called together his entire army. He was

accompanied by his eight lieutenants. He performed the sacrifice for success in war. He surveyed the wine[322] prepared for use in the course of war. He observed the auspicious signs in the quarters and set off. He, the son of Bali,[323] the heroic warrior capable of fighting with ten thousand persons, was very enthusiastic.

25-26. He thought within himself—"Who can be that warrior fond of battle, a master of the art of using weapons and missiles who will cut off my thousand hands like reeds or whom I shall cut into hundred pieces ?"

27-28. In the meantime, in the month of Vaiśākha after her monthly course, the daughter of Bāṇa had her auspicious bath and auspicious rites after worshipping lord Śiva. At night she lay asleep in the well-guarded harem. It was then that Kāma entered the place with lord Śiva.

29-30. She was seized by Kṛṣṇa's grandson[324] sent by Pārvatī of divine Māyā. She began to cry helplessly. He enjoyed her forcibly. Within a moment he was carried to Dvārakā[325] by Pārvatī's attendants by means of their divine Yogic power.

31. Rubbed and squeezed thus, she got up crying. She mumbled various words to her female attendants. She even decided to give up her life.

32. O Vyāsa, she was then reminded by her friend of the fault she had committed previously. She then came to realise the entire incident that had occurred formerly.

33. O sage, Ūṣā, daughter of Bāṇa, spoke sweetly to Citralekhā, daughter of Kumbhāṇḍa.

Ūṣā said—

34. "Dear friend, if he is the person ordained as my husband by Pārvatī, how can I obtain him duly ?

322. Cp. Note 277 P. 963.

323. Bāṇa was the son of Bali also called Mahābali. He ruled at Śoṇitapura while his father's capital was Mahābalipura. We can construct the ancestry of Bāṇa from Śivapurāṇa : Hiraṇyakaśipu—Prahlāda—Virocana—Bali—Bāṇa.

324. Aniruddha was the son of Pradyumna and grandson of Kṛṣṇa.

325. There were two Dvārakās connected with Kṛṣṇa. The one was situated near Kodinar on the sea-shore between the mouths of the rivers : Somat and Singāvara. Kṛṣṇa is said to have resided here and later on transferred himself to Dvārakā in Okhā maṇḍala in Kathiawar.

35. In what family is he born who has fascinated my mind thus ?" On hearing the words of Ūṣā, the friend told her then.

Citralekhā said:—

36. "O gentle lady, how shall I bring that man who was seen by you in the dream and whom I do not know."

37. Thus said by her, the daughter of the Daitya blinded by passion was ready to end her life. She was saved thus by her friend on the first day.

38. O excellent sage, again that daughter of Kumbhāṇḍa, Citralekhā, of great intellect spoke to Ūṣā the daughter of Bāṇa.

39. I can dispel your grief if such a man could be anywhere in the three worlds. I shall bring him who has captivated your mind. Please mention the details of his features.

Sanatkumāra said:—

40. After saying this, she painted all the gods on a canvas together with the Daityas, Dānavas, Gandharvas, Siddhas, Nāgas, Yakṣas and others.

41. Similarly she painted men, the Vṛṣṇis among them, the heroic Ānakadundubhi, Balarāma, Kṛṣṇa and Pradyumna the excellent among men.

42. On seeing Aniruddha the son of Pradyumna painted, she became bashful. Ūṣā's heart was filled with delight. She stood with downcast face.

Ūṣā said—

43. "O, this is the thief who has stolen my heart. This is the man whom I secured in the night.

44. By his very contact I became fascinated. I wish to know about him. O beautiful woman, mention everything to me.

45. In whose family is he born ? What is his name ? On being thus asked by her, the lady, expert in yogic practice, mentioned the name of the family.

46. O excellent sage, on hearing about his family, the eager and passionate daughter of Bāṇa said.

Ūṣā said—

47-48. O my friend, ascertain some means lovingly so that I shall regain my beloved husband in a trice. Without him, my friend, I am not at all eager to live even for a moment. Please bring him here strenuously. O my friend, make me happy.

Sanatkumāra said:—

49. On being thus requested by the daughter of Bāṇa, O excellent sage, the daughter of the minister was surprised and began to think seriously.

50. Then taking leave of her friend, and knowing him to be the grandson of Kṛṣṇa, Citralekhā got ready to go to Dvārakā with the velocity of the mind.

51-53. When the third day after the fourteenth day in the dark half of the month of Jyeṣṭha elapsed, a Muhūrta before the dawn, she reached the city of Dvārakā within a moment by the aerial path because she was a Yoginī. Then in the park of the harem the son of Pradyumna was seen by her playing with women and drinking wine. He was dark-complexioned but beautiful in every limb, smiling and in the prime of youth.

54-55. When he lay on the cot she encompassed him with the shroud of darkness by employing her Tāmasa Yoga. Thereafter she carried the cot on her head and within a moment reached the city of Śoṇita where the daughter of Bāṇa eagerly awaited her.

56. Passionate that she was, she made various mad pranks displaying her emotions. On seeing that he was actually brought she became frightened too.

57. When they began their sexual dalliance in that fresh contact in the well-guarded harem, it became known to all in a moment.

58-59. The man with a divine body who carried on illegitimate affairs with a virgin was found out by the persons appointed at the doorway to the harem with cane-sticks in their old and emaciated hands, by means of gestures and inferences. They understood that he was a young man, very comely in features, daring and fond of battle.

60. On seeing him, the heroic men who guarded the harem went and told Bāṇa, son of Bali, everything.

The gatekeepers said :—

61. O lord, no one knows how this was done. Indra has entered your harem in secret and forcibly. He has outraged the modesty of your daughter by seizing her himself.

62. O lord of Dānavas, of great arms, see, see him here. Do whatever is proper. We are not at fault.

Sanatkumāra said:—

63. O excellent sage, on hearing their words, on hearing of the defilement of his daughter, the lord of Dānavas of great strength, became surprised.

CHAPTER FIFTYTHREE

(*The dalliance of Ūṣā and Aniruddha*)

Sanatkumāra said:—

1. The infuriated Asura Bāṇa went there and saw Aniruddha who was in the fresh years of youth and who seemed to have been born especially for divine sports.

2. The infuriated Bāṇa, very efficient in war, was a bit surprised on seeing him and wondered why he had done like that and therefore said mockingly.

3. "Oh this man is really handsome, bold and daring. Who can this unfortunate deluded person be? His death is imminent.

4. O angry ones, with terrible weapons immediately kill the fellow who has outraged the traditional purity of my family and defiled my dear daughter.

5. O heroic ones, bind the terrible fellow of evil conduct. Put him in a frightful prison for a long time".

6. After saying this, the Asura Bāṇa thought within himself intelligently. "It is not known who this fearless fellow is. Certainly he is a man of terrible exploit". Thinking thus Bāṇa hesitated to act.

7. Then gradually the evil-minded Daitya ordered ten thousand men from his army for slaying him.

8. Commanded by him those heroic terrible fellows encircled the harem saying. "Cut him, pierce him".

9-10. On seeing the army of the enemy, Aniruddha the scion of the Yādava family, roared. He seized the big iron club from the harem-gate and came out of the apartment like the god of death armed with thunderbolt. With that iron club he killed the servants and returned to the harem.

11. O excellent sage, thus Aniruddha strengthened by Śiva's splendour, with eyes turned red by anger, killed all the ten thousand men of the army.

12-14. With the sword captured in the course of the battle he killed ten thousands of horses and charioteers of the lord of Daityas. When a hundred thousand soldiers had been killed, the Asura Bāṇa furiously entered the fray taking with him Kumbhāṇḍa, expert in war. He then challenged Aniruddha for a duel in the course of that war—Aniruddha the highly intelligent son of Pradyumna, of refulgent body and protected by Śiva's brilliance.

15. Aniruddha then seized a spear blazing like the fire of death, for killing him and hit him with that.

16. Bāṇa was hit with the spear even as he was seated in a chariot. In a trice the heroic demon vanished along with his horse.

17. When he vanished, Aniruddha, the unvanquished son of Pradyumna, stood steady like a mountain observing all the quarters.

18. Remaining invisible, that Dānava Bāṇa, practising deceptive fight, hit him again and again with thousands of weapons.

19. That powerful son of Bali, the heroic devotee of Śiva, the Asura Bāṇa deceitfully bound him with Serpent-nooses.[326]

20. After binding him and putting him in a cage he

326. Nāgapāśa was a sort of magical noose used in battle to entangle an enemy. Formerly it was the exclusive weapon of Asura Varuṇa.

stopped the battle. The infuriated Bāṇa then spoke to the very powerful son of the charioteer.

The Asura Bāṇa said:—

21. O son of the charioteer, cut off the head of this wicked fellow who has defiled my family.

22. After chopping off the limbs, give them to the Rākṣasas. Or let the beasts of prey swallow his flesh and blood.

23. Or kill this sinner and put him in a grassy well. O son of the charioteer, what more shall I say? By all means he must be slain.

Sanatkumāra said:—

24. On hearing his words, the Asura Kumbhāṇḍa, the most excellent of the ministers and righteous in thought, spoke to Bāṇa.

Kumbhāṇḍa said:—

25. O lord, this is not a proper thing to do. Please consider. I think by killing him we will be killing ourselves.

26. O lord, he seems to be equal to Viṣṇu in exploits. His strength has been increased by the brilliance of the moon-crested lord, your favourite.

27. Moreover, in daring he is equal to the moon-crested lord; though he is reduced to this plight he maintains his manliness.

28. It is by the grace of Śiva that he, the grandson of Kṛṣṇa, considers us insignificant as the blades of grass. Although he is bitten by serpents cruelly he is still very strong.

Sanatkumāra said:—

29. After saying thus to Bāṇa, the Dānava, the most excellent among statesmen, spoke to Aniruddha.

Kumbhāṇḍa said:—

30. "O hero, who are you? Whose son are you? Tell

us the truth. O meanest of men, of evil conduct, by whom have you been brought here?

31. Repeat piteously "I am vanquished'. Eulogise the heroic lord of the Daityas. Join your palms in reverence and bow to him.

32. If you do like this, you may get release. Otherwise this captivity and tortures will continue". On hearing this Aniruddha replied.

Aniruddha said:—

33. O friend of the basest of Daityas, O you that sustain yourself with the balls of rice offered in the hands, O demon of evil conduct, you do not know the laws of adversaries.

34. I think that for the valorous person humble supplications and running away from the battlefield are worse than death. These are adverse and painful to him like a dart.

35. For a Kṣatriya, death while fighting face to face with the enemy is commendable rather than joining the palms in reverence like a man in humble condition professing to be valorous.

Sanatkumāra said:—

36. These and many other heroic words he uttered, on hearing which Bāṇa was surprised and angry too.

37. Then a celestial voice was heard for the pacification of Bāṇa which all the heroes, Aniruddha and the minister, stood listening to.

The celestial voice said:—

38. "O Bāṇa, O great hero, you shall not be angry. "O devotee of Śiva, O intelligent one, you are the son of Bali. Ponder over this.

39. Śiva, the lord of all, the supreme lord, is the witness of all activities. This entire universe including the mobile and immobile beings is subservient to him.

40. He alone is the creator, maintainer and the destroyer of the worlds, always taking up the attributes of

Rajas, Sattva and Tamas in the form of Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva.

41. The lord is omnipresent. He is the inducer, greater than all. He is free from aberrations, unchanging, eternal, the lord of illusion and devoid of attributes.

42. Even a weak person becomes strong, thanks to his will, O excellent son of Bali. O intelligent one, realise this in your mind, be normal and complacent.

43. The lord who quells pride, who is an expert in various sports and who is favourably disposed to his devotees will destroy your arrogance."

Sanatkumāra said:—

44. O great sage, having spoken thus, the celestial voice stopped. On hearing these words the Asura Bāṇa did not kill Aniruddha.

45. Then he went to his harem and drank excellent beverages. His intellect was adversely affected, he forgot those words and began to sport.

46. Aniruddha was bound by serpentine bodies emitting poison powerfully. His passion for his beloved had not been satiated fully. He remembered Durgā then.

Aniruddha said:—

47. O goddess, you are worthy of being resorted to. I have been bound by serpents. O goddess bestowing fame, O goddess of fierce fury, come and save me.

48. O great goddess, devotee of Śiva, O cause of creation, sustenance and dissolution, there is no other saviour except you. O Śivā, save me.

Sanatkumāra said:—

49. Propitiated by him, Kālī, lustrous like the split collyrium, arrived there in the dark night of the fourteenth day in the dark half of the month Jyeṣṭha.

50-51. With the heavy blows of her fists she broke the cage. She reduced the serpentine arrows to ashes. She released Aniruddha and let him enter the harem and then vanished from the scene.

52. O great sage, thus, thanks to the grace of the

goddess—the Energy of Śiva, Aniruddha got rid of the difficulty, became free from pain and obtained happiness.

53. Securing success by means of Śiva's Energy, Aniruddha the son of Pradyumna gained access to his beloved, the daughter of Bāṇa and rejoiced.

54. In the company of his beloved—the daughter of Bāṇa, he carried on dalliance and was happy drinking the beverages till his eyes became red.

CHAPTER FIFTYFOUR

(The fight among Bāṇa, Śiva, Kṛṣṇa and others)

Vyāsa said:—

1. O excellent sage, when Aniruddha the grandson of Kṛṣṇa was abducted by the daughter of Kumbhāṇḍa what did Kṛṣṇa do? Please narrate it to me.

Sanatkumāra said:—

2. O excellent sage, on hearing the woeful cries of his women when Aniruddha had gone off suddenly, Kṛṣṇa too became vexed.

3. The four months of the rainy season thus went by when his relatives and Viṣṇu could not see Aniruddha and so they bewailed.

4. On hearing from Nārada about the imprisonment and activities of Aniruddha the Vṛṣṇis, followers of Kṛṣṇa, became dejected.

5. On hearing everything, Kṛṣṇa immediately called Garuḍa and went to the city of Śoṇita eagerly for fighting.

6. Pradyumna, Yuyudhāna, Sāmba, Sāraṇa, Nanda, Upananda, Bhadra and others following Rāma and Kṛṣṇa went there.

7. They were accompanied by twelve Akṣauhiṇīs. They, the chief of Sātvatas[327] laid a siege all round the city of Bāṇa.

8. On seeing the parks, fortresses, ceilings and minarets of the city thus broken, Bāṇa became infuriated and set forth with an equal number of armies.

9. In order to help Bāṇa, lord Rudra accompanied by his son and the Pramathas rode on the bull Nandin and arrived there to fight.

10. A tumultuous fight, wonderfully causing horripilation ensued between Kṛṣṇa and his followers on the one hand and the supporters of Bāṇa, Rudra etc. on the other.

11. The fight was between Kṛṣṇa and Śiva; Pradyumna and Kārttikeya; Kumbhāṇḍaka and Kūpakarṇa, Bala and Saṁyuga.

12. Sāmba fought with Bāṇa's son; Sātyaki with Bāṇa; Garuḍa with Nandin and groups of one side fought with the groups of the other.

13. Brahmā and other gods, sages, Siddhas, Cāraṇas, Gandharvas and celestial damsels came there in aerial chariots to witness the affray.

14. O best of brahmins, a terrible fight ensued between the members of the Yadu family with the groups of Pramathas ending with "Revatīs".

15. Kṛṣṇa, his brother Rāma and the intelligent Pradyumna, fought an unequalled fight with the Pramathas.

16-17. The fight continued with Agni, Yama, Varuṇa, Vimukha, Tripāda, Jvara and Kārttikeya and groups of Pramathas with the Vṛṣṇis. It was terrible and frightful causing horripilation.

18. There was fight with the shameless women too, several groups of terrifying Koṭarīs at every step, not far from one another.

19. Kṛṣṇa routed the Bhūtas, Pramathas and

327. Sātvatas were a family of Yādava race whose founder was Yadu, son of King Yayāti. King Sātvata founded a branch of the Yādavas after his name. He had four sons : (1) Bhajin Bhajamāna (2) Devavṛdha (3) Andhaka mahābhoja and (4) Vṛṣṇi Kṛṣṇa, the celebrated hero of the Mahābhārata was born in the Sātvata-Vṛṣṇi family.

Guhyakas, the followers of Śiva with sharp-pointed arrows discharged from his bow.

20. The heroes Pradyumna and others jubilant over the war destroyed the armies of the enemies and fought terribly.

21. On seeing his army being scattered, Śiva became highly infuriated and roared terribly.

22. On hearing that, Śiva's Gaṇas too shouted and fought. They suppressed the opponents with their strength increased by Śiva's brilliance.

23. Kṛṣṇa discharged separate types of missiles from his bow towards the trident-bearing lord Śiva who without showing any dismay quelled them directly.

24. They discharged Brahmā-missile in counter to Brahmā missile; the mountain-missile to the wind-missile; the cloud-missile to the fire-missile and Śiva-missile to the Nārāyaṇa missile.

25. Defeated by the opponents, the army of Kṛṣṇa fled, O Vyāsa; it could not face the full refulgence of Śiva.

26. O sage, when his army was routed, lord Kṛṣṇa, the scorcher of enemies, discharged terrible fever missile named 'cold'.[328]

27. O sage, when the army of Kṛṣṇa was routed, the cold fever missile of Kṛṣṇa rushed at Rudra blazing the ten quarters.

28. On seeing that coming, lord Śiva discharged his own fever missile. The two fever missiles fought each other.

29. Oppressed by the fever missile of lord Śiva, the fever missile of Śiva cried aloud. Unable to secure succour elsewhere, it eulogised the bull-bannered lord.

30. The delighted lord Śiva, favourably disposed to those who seek refuge, eulogised by Viṣṇu's fever missile, spoke to the cold fever missile of Viṣṇu.

328. The mention of the missile of cold fever and of the counter missile to ward it off indicates the heights that India had attained in military science.

Lord Śiva said:—

31. "O cold fever, I am delighted. Leave off your fear from my fever. There is no fear from fever to him who remembers this anecdote.

Sanatkumāra said:—

32. Thus advised, the fever missile of Viṣṇu went away after bowing to Śiva. On seeing that activity, Kṛṣṇa was surprised and dismayed.

33. When attacked by the arrows of Pradyumna, the infuriated Kārttikeya, the slayer of Daityas, hit Pradyumna with his spear.

34. When hit by Kārttikeya's spear, Pradyumna, though very strong, shed blood from his limbs and fled from the battle ground.

35. Hit with various missiles by Kumbhāṇḍa and Kūpakarṇa, Balabhadra though strong did not stay there. He fled from the battle-field.

36. Garuḍa, took up a thousand bodies and drank up the water from the great sea. He then began to work havoc by showering the sea-waters through Āvarta clouds.

37. Then the infuriated bull, the powerful vehicle of lord Śiva, hit him with great force by means of his horns.

38. When his limbs were shattered by the blows of his horns, Garuḍa was dismayed. He forsook Viṣṇu and fled from the battle ground immediately.

39. When the situation was like this, lord Kṛṣṇa, dismayed by Śiva's refulgence spoke to the charioteer suddenly.

Lord Kṛṣṇa said:—

40. O charioteer, listen to my words. Drive the chariot immediately to lord Śiva so that I shall speak to him.

Sanatkumāra said:—

41. Thus commanded by Viṣṇu, the charioteer Dāruka,

the foremost of persons of good qualities, drove the chariot immediately to lord Śiva.

42. Lord Kṛṣṇa resorted to Śiva, favourably disposed to his devotees, bowed to him with devotion with palms joined in reverence and submitted as follows.

Lord Kṛṣṇa said:—

43. O lord Śiva, lord of the gods, favourably disposed to those who seek refuge in you, I bow to you the great lord, the soul of all and of infinite power.

44. I bow to you, the cause of the origin, sustenance and dissolution of the universe, the sole form of perfect knowledge, the symbol of Brahman, the highly quiescent, the supreme lord.

45-46. The time, the divinity, the activity, the individual soul, the nature, the solid objects, the vital airs, the soul, the groups of created beings, the series of seeds and sprouts everything is your illusion, O lord of the universe. I resort to you the cause of those things, the great lord.

47. By the different forms assumed by you sportively, you, the lord of the worlds, support the gods and others and destroy those who go astray.

48. You are the Brahman, the great light that is hidden in the Śabda Brahman which the purified souls see like the sole firmament.

49. You are the primordial Puruṣa without a second. You are the fourth being,[320] the vision of the soul. You appear as undergoing change though you are the lord, the cause without another cause unto you.

50. O lord, for the manifestation of all the attributes, you appear different through your illusion, O supreme lord.

51. O lord, just as the unconcealed sun illuminates many of his reflections by his brilliance, so you too do, being the great illuminating light.

52. O great one, O self-illuminated lord Śiva, you

320. Śiva represents the fourth (Turya) state of the soul, the pure, impersonal and unconditioned. The other three states of the soul viz. the state of wakefulness (जाग्रत) dream (स्वप्न) and unconsciousness (सुषुप्ति) are impure, personal and conditioned by physical envelope.

brighten the attributes by means of the attribute itself, though you are not encompassed by the attribute.

53. People whose intellects are deluded by your illusion become attached to sons, wives, abodes etc. and sink and float in the ocean of sin.

54. After deriving this divinely bestowed human habitation, if a person does not control his sense-organs and respect your feet he is to be pitied. He deceives his own self.

55. O lord, it is at your bidding that I have come here to cut off the hands of Bāṇa. This haughty Bāṇa was cursed by you who are the destroyer of haughtiness.

56. O lord, please return from the battle-ground. Let not your curse go in vain. O lord, command me to cut off the hands of Bāṇa.

Sanatkumāra said:—

57. O great sage, on hearing these words of lord Kṛṣṇa, Śiva the supreme lord who was propitiated by Kṛṣṇa's eulogy, replied :—

Lord Śiva said:—

58. O dear, what you say is true; the lord of the Daityas has been cursed by me. It is at my bidding that you have come here to cut off the hands of Bāṇa.

59. O lord of Lakṣmī, what can I do? O Viṣṇu, I am subservient to my devotees always. How can there be the chopping of Bāṇa's arms while I am watching?

60. Hence at my bidding make me benumbed by means of your Jṛmbhaṇa missile.[390] Thereafter you can do as you please and be happy.

Sanatkumāra said :—

61. O great sage, thus urged by Śiva, lord Kṛṣṇa was surprised. He returned to the battlefield and rejoiced.

62. O Vyāsa, Viṣṇu an expert in the use of various missiles fixed the Jṛmbhana missile to the bow and discharged it at Śiva.

390. Jṛmbhaṇa missile is said to possess the potency of benumbing the activities of the person against whom it is used.

63. After enchanting Śiva, and making him benumbed by means of the Jṛmbhana missile, Viṣṇu slew the army of Bāṇa by means of swords, daggers and clubs.

CHAPTER FIFTYFIVE

(*The chopping of Bāṇa's arms and his humiliation*)

Vyāsa said:—

1. O dear sage, Sanatkumāra, O omniscient son of Brahmā, obeisance be to you. A wonderful story has been narrated to me by you.

2. When Śiva was made to yawn and lie flat by Viṣṇu through the Jṛmbhaṇa missile, in the course of the war and when the army of Bāṇa was slain, what did Bāṇa do? Please narrate.

Sūta said:—

3. On hearing these words of Vyāsa of immeasurable refulgence, the great sage, the delighted son of Brahmā, replied.

Sanatkumāra said:—

4. O Vyāsa of great intellect, listen to the highly wonderful story of Kṛṣṇa and Śiva who indulge in sports in accordance with the worldly conventions.

5. When Śiva sportively lay flat on the ground along with his sons and Gaṇas, Bāṇa the king of Daityas came out to fight with Kṛṣṇa.

6. With the horses mobilised by Kumbhāṇḍa, and holding various weapons and missiles, the powerful son of Bali performed an incomparable fight.

7. On seeing his army destroyed, the lord of the Daityas became infuriated. The powerful son of Bali fought an incomparable battle.

8. Lord Kṛṣṇa the great hero with additional strength derived from Śiva roared loudly in the battlefield considering Bāṇa as insignificant as a blade of grass.

9. O great sage, he made the twanging sound on his wonderful bow called Śārṅga and frightened what little remained of Bāṇa's army.

10. The intervening space between heaven and Earth was filled with the great sound originating from the twang on his bow.

11. Drawing the string of his bow upto the ear, the infuriated Viṣṇu discharged sharp arrows, as furious as serpents, on Bāṇa.

12. On seeing the arrows coming, Bāṇa the son of Bali, split them even before they reached him, by means of arrows discharged from his bow.

13. Lord Bāṇa, suppressor of enemies roared again. The Vṛṣṇis thinking of Kṛṣṇa were afraid and dejected.

14. Thinking upon the lotus-like feet of Śiva, the haughty son of Bali discharged his arrows at Kṛṣṇa the most valorous.

15. Thinking upon the lotus-like feet of Śiva, the powerful destroyer of Asuras, Kṛṣṇa split them before they reached him by means of his own arrows.

16. Rāma and other Vṛṣṇis, the powerful ones agitated by anger, slew their respective opponents.

17. Thus the tumultuous fight between the two strong armies went on for a long time aggravating the wonder of the spectators.

18. In the meantime the infuriated king of birds suppressed the army of Bāṇa striking all with his wings.

19. Seeing his army routed and himself oppressed, Bāṇa, the powerful lord of Daityas, son of Bali, foremost among Siva's devotees, was infuriated.

20. Thinking upon the lotus-like feet of Śiva, the thousand-armed Bāṇa displayed his valour unbearable to his enemies.

21. The destroyer of heroes discharged simultaneously an unlimited number of arrows on Garuḍa, Kṛṣṇa and Yadus separately.

22. O sage, he hit Garuḍa with an arrow, Kṛṣṇa with another, Bala with a third. The powerful hero hit others too.

23. Then Kṛṣṇa the great lord, of great valour, of the

form of Viṣṇu, the destroyer of demons, became angry and roared in the course of the battle.

24. Thinking upon Śiva he hit Bāṇa and his terrible army simultaneously with the good arrows discharged with force from his bow.

25. Viṣṇu split his bow and umbrella as well as other things. Without being excited he killed and felled his horses by means of his arrows.

26. Bāṇa the great hero roared furiously. He hit Kṛṣṇa with his iron club and Kṛṣṇa fell on the ground.

27. O celestial sage, Kṛṣṇa got up immediately and fought with Bāṇa, the great devotee of Śiva. It was to keep up the worldly sport that he fought thus.

28. A great battle went on for a long time between Kṛṣṇa who was Viṣṇu or Śiva himself and that strong Asura who was the most excellent devotee of Śiva.

29. O great sage, the powerful Kṛṣṇa fought for a long time with Bāṇa. Deriving strength at the instance of Śiva he became furious.

30. At the bidding of Śiva, lord Kṛṣṇa, the destroyer of heroic enemies, chopped off several arms of Bāṇa by means of Sudarśana.

31. Only his four beautiful arms were left. Thanks to the grace of Śiva, the demon too was freed from pain.

32. Forgetting himself, Kṛṣṇa who assumed a great prowess, attempted to cut off the head of Bāṇa. Then Śiva got up.

Śiva said:—

33. O lord, son of Devakī, O Viṣṇu, what was ordained by me formerly has been accomplished by you who always follow my dictates.

34. Do not cut off the head of Bāṇa. Withdraw your weapon Sudarśana. At my bidding the discus shall always be rendered ineffective with regard to my people.

35. O Viṣṇu, this unfailing discus and victory in battle were formerly bestowed on you by me. Hence you withdraw from the battleground.

36. O lord of Lakṣmī, you did not hurl this discus at

Dadhīca,[331] Rāvaṇa, Tāraka, Tripuras and others without my consent.

37. You are a great Yogin, the supreme soul and the exciter of men. Hence you ponder over this yourself. You are engaged in the welfare of all living beings.

38. I have granted him a boon that he will not fear death. These words of mine shall remain true for ever. I am pleased with you.

39. O Viṣṇu, sometime back he became haughty enough to say "Give me battle" while he scratched his arms and forgot his goal.

40. Then I cursed him—"Ere long, the person will arrive and cut off your arms. You shall be cured of your haughtiness".

41. (*Turning to Bāṇa*) At my bidding Viṣṇu has cut off your arms. Now withdraw from the battlefield. Go back to your abode along with the married couple.

Sanatkumāra said:—

42. Saying this and uniting them in friendship, lord Śiva returned to his abode along with his sons and Gaṇas.

43. On hearing the words of Śiva, Kṛṣṇa withdrew Sudarśana. With his body unwounded, the victorious Kṛṣṇa entered into the harem.

44. He consoled Aniruddha and his wife. He accepted the jewels given in plenty by Bāṇa.

45. They took Ūṣā's friend Citralekhā the great Yoginī also with them. Kṛṣṇa who accomplished his task at the bidding of Śiva was immensely pleased.

46. After mentally bowing to Śiva, Viṣṇu took leave of Bāṇa and returned to his city along with his followers.

47. On the way he conquered Varuṇa who had opposed him in various ways. After reaching Dvārakā he celebrated the event jubilantly.

48. After reaching Dvārakā he dismissed Garuḍa. Seeing his friends and joking with them he roamed about as he pleased.

331. It refers to the incident of the battle between Viṣṇu and Dadhīca. Cp. ŚP. RS II Ch 39.

CHAPTER FIFTYSIX

(*Bāṇāsura attains the position of Śiva's Gaṇa*)

Nārada said:—

1. O great sage, when Kṛṣṇa left for Dvārakā along with Aniruddha and his wife, what did Bāṇa do? Please narrate the same to me.

Sanatkumāra said:—

2. When Kṛṣṇa left for Dvārakā with Aniruddha and his wife, Bāṇa was distressed thinking on his previous ignorance.

3. Then Nandin, a gaṇa of Śiva, spoke to the grief-stricken Daitya Bāṇa whose limbs were smeared with blood and who repented repeatedly.

Nandīśvara said:—

4. O Bāṇa, devotee of Śiva, do not repent. Śiva is compassionate towards his devotees. Hence he is called Bhaktavatsala (i.e. favourably disposed to the devotees).

5. O foremost among devotees, whatever has happened, has happened at his will. Consider this and remember Śiva again and again.

6. Fixing your mind in the primordial being, Śiva who is compassionate towards the devotees, you celebrate his festival again and again.

7. At the suggestion of Nandin, Bāṇa who had been like Rāhu unto his enemies immediately went to Śiva's temple with lofty mind and great courage.

8. After going there he bowed to the lord and lamented in great agitation. Bāṇa who had been divested of his haughtiness became overwhelmed with love and devotion.

9-10. He eulogised him with various hymns. He bowed to the lord in the course of his worship. With proper steps and gestures of hands he performed the Tāṇḍava dance assuming various poses and postures—Pratyālīdha, Sthānaka, Ālīḍha[332] being the chief among them.

332. Ālīḍha is a kind of pose in dance, with the right foot advanced and the left retracted. The opposite of this is the pose of Pratyālīḍha in which the left foot is advanced and the right is drawn back. Sthānaka is a particular attitude of the body in dance.

11-14. He produced thousands of gestures through his mouth. He knit and bent his brows and shook his head in various ways. He kept thousands of attendants in rows. He showed various gestures gradually. Much of his blood was shed on the ground. By all these means be propitiated the trident-bearing moon-crested lord. Bāṇāsura the great devotee of Śiva forgot himself and his activities in the course of his worship. Śiva who is fond of dance and music and is favourably disposed to his devotees spoke to Bāṇa.

Śiva said:—

15. "Dear Bāṇa, son of Bali, I am delighted by your dance. O lord of Daityas, you choose the boon whatever be in your mind".

Sanatkumāra said:—

16-20. O sage, on hearing the words of Śiva, Bāṇa the lord of Daityas asked for the healing of wounds, the skill in duels, everlasting position of Gaṇahood, the kingship for Uṣā's son at the city of Śoṇita, absence of enmity with the gods and Viṣṇu in particular, absence of rebirth as a Daitya defiled by the attributes Rajas and Tamas, special devotion to Śiva without any aberration for ever, friendship with the devotees of Śiva and kindness to all living beings. After requesting for these boons, the son of Bali, the great Asura joined his palms in reverence and eulogised Śiva with tears of love in his eyes.

Bāṇa said:—

21. O great lord, lord of the gods, favourably disposed to those who seek refuge in you, O great lord, I bow to you, O kinsman of the distressed, O storehouse of mercy.

22. O Śiva, O ocean of sympathy, you have taken pity on me. O lord, being delighted with me you have removed my arrogance.

23. You are Brahman, the great soul, the all-pervading lord. Your body is the whole cosmos. You are Ugra, Īśa, Virāṭ, the great, accompanied by everything.

24. O lord, your navel is the sky, mouth is the fire, semen is the water, ear the quarters, head the heaven, foot the earth and mind the moon.

25. Your eye is the sun, the stomach the ocean, the arm Indra, and the intellect Brahmā. Your excretion is Prajāpati and your heart is Dharma.

26. O lord, your hairs are the herbs and plants, your tresses the clouds, your eyes the three attributes. You are the Puruṣa, the soul of all.

27. They call Brāhmaṇa your mouth, Kṣatriya your arms, Vaiśya your thighs and Śūdra your feet.[333]

28. O lord Śiva, you alone deserve to be adored by all living beings. A person worshipping you certainly derives liberation.

29. O lord, the man who forsakes you, the favourite Ātman, for the adverse objects of sense, swallows poison forsaking nectar.

30. Viṣṇu, Brahmā, the gods and the sages of pure mind, in every respect resort to you, the favourite lord.

Sanatkumāra said:—

31. After saying this, the Asura Bāṇa, son of Bali stopped with all the limbs blooming with love and bowed to lord Śiva.

32. On hearing the request of his devotee Bāṇa, lord Śiva said "You will get everything" and vanished there itself.

33. Then through the grace of Śiva, Bāṇa attained the immortality of the eternal time and becoming one of the attendants of Śiva he rejoiced much.

34. Thus I have narrated by means of words pleasing to the ears, the excellent story of the trident-bearing lord Śiva, who is the preceptor of the preceptors and who sports about always in the middle of the worlds. His story includes his activities in relation to Bāṇa.

333. It refers to the fourfold classification of ancient Indian society as mentioned in the Puruṣasūkta of the Ṛgveda.

CHAPTER FIFTYSEVEN

(*Gajāsura is slain*)

Sanatkumāra said:—

1. O Vyāsa, listen with great devotion to the story of moon-crested lord, how he killed Gajāsura, the lord of Dānavas, by means of his trident.

2. Formerly when the Asura Mahiṣa[334] was killed in battle by the goddess for the welfare of the gods, they became very happy.

3-4. O great sage, his son the great hero Gajāsura could not forget the slaying of his father by the goddess at the request of the gods and hence remembered that enmity. He therefore went to the forest for undertaking penance. Interestingly he performed penance ,meditating on Brahmā.

5. "I shall not be killed by men or women overwhelmed by lust." Thinking thus in his mind he directed his attention to austerities.

6. He performed a severe penance in a valley on the Himālaya mountain. He kept his arms lifted. He fixed his eyes at the sky. He stood on the ground on the two big toes.

7. With plenty of matted tresses of hair the benevolent Gajāsura, the son of Mahiṣa shone with his refulgence like the sun at the time of dissolution.

8. The fire in the form of penance originating from his head filled with smoke spread all round to the worlds above, below and on the sides scorching them.

9. The rivers and the seas were agitated by the fire originating from his head. The stars fell along with the planets. The ten quarters blazed.

10. The gods scorched by the fire left heaven and went to Brahma's world along with Indra and submitted to him. The earth quaked.

The gods said:—

11. O Brahmā, we are agitated on being scorched by

334. The Asura Mahiṣa, father of Gaja, was slain in battle by Caṇḍikā. He should be distinguished from the Asura Mahiṣa who was killed by kārttikeya.

the penance of Gajāsura. We are unable to stay in heaven. Hence we seek refuge in you.

12. Make it subside and find out a merciful remedy to enliven others. Otherwise the worlds will perish. Truth. It is the truth that we speak.

13. Thus informed by the gods including Indra and others the selfborn deity Brahmā went to the hermitage of the excellent Daitya along with Bhṛgu,[335] Dakṣa[336] and others.

14. On seeing him scorching the heaven and the worlds by his penance, the surprised creator laughed and said.

Brahmā said:—

15. "O lord of Daityas, stand up, stand up. O son of Mahiṣa, you have achieved perfection in penance. O dear one, I, the granter of boons, have come. Choose your boon as you wish."

Sanatkumāra said :—

16. Getting up in a hurry, the son of Mahiṣa, the lord of Daityas glanced at the lord and praised him lovingly with choking words.

Gajāsura said:—

17-18. O lord, O lord of the gods, if you are going to grant me a boon let me be immune from death by men or women overwhelmed by lust. Let me be very powerful, valorous and invincible to the gods, the guardians of the worlds[337] and others for ever. Let me enjoy all prosperities.

335. Bhṛgu was a Prajāpati and a great sage who pounded the race of the Bhṛgus in which Jamadagni and Paraśurāma were born According to the present Purāna he was the son of Brahmā, born out of his heart. (See RS I. 16.4).

336. Dakṣa, son of Brahmā, born out of his breath (Ibid 1.16.5) was a Prajāpati. His daughter Sati was married to Śiva. For details see Ibid. II section.

337. Lokapālas are the regents of the four cardinal and four intermediate points of the world. They are :

इन्द्रो वह्निः पितृपतिर्नैर्ऋतो वरुणो मरुत् ।
कुबेर ईशः पतयः पूर्वादीनां दिशां क्रमात् ॥

Sanatkumāra said:—

19. Thus requested by the Dānava, Brahmā[338] who was delighted by his penance granted him the rare boon.

20. Securing the boons thus, the Daitya Gajāsura the son of Mahiṣa, returned to his abode with a happy mind.

21-22. The great Asura conquered all the quarters, the three worlds, the gods, Asuras, human beings, kings, Gandharvas, Garuḍa, serpents and others. He made them subservient to him. He became the conqueror of the universe. He usurped the places of the guardians of the worlds and took away their glory.

23. He occupied heaven[339] possessing the glory of the celestial garden and the palace of lord Indra built by Viśvakarman.[340]

24. The powerful Daitya of a lofty mind who reigned as the sole ruler after conquering all the worlds sported in the palace of lord Indra. The gods and others who were overwhelmed by his power worshipped the pair of his feet. He exercised a stern and fierce authority.

25. Thus conquering the quarters and reigning as the supreme overlord he enjoyed pleasures to the maximum extent. Since he had not conquered his senses he was never satiated in his enjoyment of pleasures.

26. He was haughty, puffed up with prosperity. He slighted and transgressed the injunctions of the sacred scriptures. After the lapse of some time he became evil-minded.

27. The Dānava, the suppressor of the gods, the son of Mahiṣāsura harassed the excellent brahmins and the sages on the earth very much.

28. The wicked Daitya harassed the gods, the human beings, and all the Pramathas. He tortured all righteous people particularly recollecting the previous enmity.

29. O dear, once this Dānava of great strength,

338. Brahmā assumed the name Śatadhṛti after completing a hundred sacrifices. This name he shares with Indra, the performer of a hundred horse-sacrifices.

339. See Note 298 P. 992.

340. Viśvakarman was the founder of the science of architecture and mechanics among the gods. He is credited with the construction of the royal palace for lord Indra.

Gajāsura came to the capital city of Śiva.

30. O sage, when the lord of Asuras came there, there was a great tumult among the residents of Ānandavana, They shouted "Protect, Protect."

31-32. When this son of Mahiṣāsura haughty of his valour entered the city suppressing the Pramathas, Indra and other gods previously vanquished by him sought refuge in Śiva. After bowing to him they eulogised him with a great respect.

33. They mentioned to him the arrival of the Dānava at Kāśī, the height of distress of the people there, especially of the rulers.

The gods said:—

34. O great gods, O lord of gods, the Asura has gone to your city. He is inflicting pain on your people. O storehouse of benignity, please slay him.

35. Wherever he sets foot on the earth he shakes the ground there by his great weight.

36. By his great velocity trees fall down with roots and branches. Hit by his brawny arms, big mountains are reduced to powder.

37. The clouds leave the sky hit by his head. Still they do not lose their blueness due to the contact with his hair.

38. When he breathes out, the mighty oceans surge up with their billows. Even the rivers are filled with waves as though with whales.

39. His height is nine thousand Yojanas. The girth of this Asura who wields Māyā is also of that proportion.

40. The tawny colour and the tremulousness of his eyes is not borne even by the lightning. Thus he has come there all of a sudden.

41. Whichever quarter he approaches, the Dānava is unbearably oppressive. "I am not to be killed by men or women overwhelmed by lust" he shouts.

42. O lord of the gods, we have thus mentioned humbly the activities of that Dānava. Please protect your devotees, O lord, desirous of protecting Kāśī.

Sanatkumāra said:—

43. Thus requested by the gods, Śiva desirous of protecting the devotees came there quickly with the desire of slaying him.

44. On seeing that Śiva, favourably disposed to his devotees, had come roaring with the trident in his hand, Gajāsura too roared.

45. A wonderfully terrible and great battle was fought between them roaring heroically and hitting with various weapons and missiles.

46. The brilliant Gajāsura of great strength and valour pierced Śiva, the slayer of the Dānavas, with sharp arrows.

47. O sage, Śiva who assumed a terrible body, split with his terrible arrows, the arrows of the Daitya to small pieces like gingelly seeds, even before they reached him.

48. Then the infuriated Gajāsura rushed at the lord Śiva roaring loudly with a sword in hand "You are slain now by me."

49. Then the lord armed with the trident, realising that the leading Daitya who was rushing at him could not be killed by anything else or any one else, hit him with his trident.

50. When the trident pierced through his body, the Daitya Gajāsura thought that he was raised up like an umbrella. He then sang the glory of Śiva.

Gajāsura said:—

51. O great lord, lord of the gods, I am in every respect your devotee. O trident-bearing lord, I know you as the lord of heaven and destroyer of Kāma.

52. O enemy of Andhaka, O great lord, O slayer of Tripuras, O omnipresent, my death at your hands is conducive to my great glory.

53. I desire to submit something. O merciful lord, please listen to it. O conqueror of death, I am speaking the truth, not a lie. Please ponder.

54. You are the only person deserving the worship of the worlds. You stand high above the universe. Everyone

should consider a death like this conducive to glory in due course.

Sanatkumāra said:—

55. On hearing his words, lord Śiva, the storehouse of mercy, laughed and replied to Gajāsura, the son of Mahiṣa.

Lord Śiva said:—

56. O Gajāsura, O excellent Dānava, O depository of great valour, O well-intentioned one, I am delighted. Choose the boon favourable to you.

Sanatkumāra said:—

57. On hearing the words of lord Śiva, the granter of boons, the lord of Dānavas, the delighted Gajāsura replied.

Gajāsura said:—

58. O nude one, if you are delighted, O lord Śiva, wear this hide of mine sanctified by the fire of your trident.

59. It is of your size, it is gentle to the touch, it has been kept as a stake in the battlefield, it is worth seeing, it is of divine nature and it is always pleasing.

60. Let it ever emit an agreeable smell, let it be soft for ever, let it be ever free from dirt, let it be your best ornament always.

61. O lord, even after being scorched by the flames of the fire of penance for a long time, this hide was not burnt, hence it is the storehouse of holy fragrance.

62. O nude one, if my hide is not meritorious how did it get into contact with your limbs in the battlefield?

63. O Śiva, if you are satisfied, please grant me another boon. Beginning from today let your name be Kṛttivāsas (one clad in elephant-hide).

Sanatkumāra said:—

64. On hearing his words, Śiva who is favourably disposed to his devotees, was pleased and replied to Gajāsura, the son of Mahiṣa "Let it be so".

65. Lord Śiva, the favourite of his devotees, becoming delighted spoke again to the Dānava Gajāsura whose mind had been purified by devotion.

Lord Śiva said:—

66. "In this holy place, a means to the achievement of liberation, let your meritorious body become phallic image yielding liberation to all.

67. It will be the foremost of all phallic images yielding salvation, destroying great sins and named "Kṛttivāseśvara".

Sanatkumāra said:—

68. After saying this Śiva, the lord of the gods, accepted the hide of Gajāsura and wore it.

69. O great sage, there was a great jubilation on that day. All the people staying at Kāśī and the Pramathas were delighted.

70. Viṣṇu, Brahmā and other gods were delighted in their minds. With palms joined in reverence they bowed to lord Śiva and eulogised him.

71. When Gajāsura the lord of the Dānavas, and the son of Mahiṣa was killed, the gods returned to their original place and the universe attained normalcy.

72. Thus I have narrated to you the story of Śiva which shows his affection to his devotees, which is conducive to the attainment of heaven, fame and longevity and which increases wealth and food-grains.

73. He who listens to this with devotion, or narrates this observing pure rites, enjoys great happiness and attains salvation, the greatest bliss hereafter.

CHAPTER FIFTYEIGHT

(*Dundubhi Nirhrāda is slain*)

Sanatkumāra said:—

1. O Vyāsa, listen. I shall narrate the story of the moon-crested lord Śiva how he slew the Daitya Dundubhinirhrāda.

2. When the Daitya Hiraṇyākṣa, son of Diti,[341] of great strength was killed by Viṣṇu, Diti remained griefstricken for a long time.

3. The wicked Daitya named Dundubhinirhrāda, the uncle of Prahlāda, the oppressor of the gods, consoled the dejected mother with the words.

4. After consoling Diti, the king of Daityas, an expert in using Māyā began to think of the ways and means of conquering the gods easily.

5. "The great Asura Hiraṇyākṣa along with his brother has been killed through Viṣṇu by the gods, the enemies of Daityas, employing deceitful means.

6. What is the strength of the gods? What is their diet? What is their support? How can the gods be easily vanquished by me?" Thinking like this he tried to find out the ways and means.

7. Thinking deeply in diverse ways the Daitya came to the conclusion that the brāhmaṇas were the cause of the trouble.[342]

8. The Daitya Dundubhinirhrāda, the most wicked enemy of the gods, ran after the brahmins to kill them.

9. Since the gods maintain themselves on sacrifices, sacrifices are born of the Vedas and the Vedas are the custody of the brāhmaṇas, so the brāhmaṇas constitute the strength of the gods.

341. Diti was the daughter of Dakṣa and wife of Kaśyapa. Her sons obtained the designation 'Daitya' after her name.

342. The anti-Brāhmana activities of the Daityas mentioned here and elsewhere in the Purāṇas were due to the fact that the Brāhmaṇas performed sacrifices wherein offerings were made to the gods. But this tradition of Brāhmaṇa—Daitya animosity is of late origin. Originally Daityas were devoted to Brāhmaṇas. The Bhārgavas were purohitas to Hiranyakaśipu. Vasiṣṭha was his hotṛ. Vṛtra and Namuci, the two famous Dānavas were Brāhmaṇas themselves. For details see AIHT. Ch XXVI.

10. Certainly the gods including Indra are supported by the brāhmaṇas. The gods gain their strength from the brāhmaṇas. There is no doubt about this.

11. If the brāhmaṇas are destroyed the Vedas will perish. If they are destroyed the gods will also perish.

12-13. If the sacrifices are destroyed, the gods will lose their food. They will grow weaker and be easily conquered. When the gods are conquered I shall become the sole honourable lord of the three worlds. I shall then confiscate the everlasting riches of the gods.

14. I shall enjoy happiness in my kingdom freed of thorns." After thinking like this the wicked Daitya thought again.

15. "Where are these brāhmaṇas in plenty—the brāhmaṇas strengthened by the splendour of the Brahman, well versed in the study of the Vedas and possessing the strength of penance?

16. It is Vārāṇasī indeed that is the place of many brāhmaṇas. I shall finish that first and then go to other holy centres.

17. In holy centres or hermitages wherever these brāhmaṇas live they shall be devoured by me."

18. After thinking thus in accordance with the nature of his race, Dundubhinirhrāda went to Kāśī and he, the wicked wielder of Māyās, killed the brāhmaṇas.

19. When the excellent brāhmaṇas went to the forest to fetch sacrificial twigs and the Darbha grass, the wicked Dānava used to eat them there.

20. After that he used to lie hidden so that nobody could detect him. In the forest he used to roam about like a forest-dweller and in the waters he used to take the form of an aquatic animal.

21-22. He was invisible in form. He wielded the art of deception. He could not be seen even by the gods. During the day he stood in the midst of sages engaged in meditation but observing the ingress and egress of persons in the hut. But at night he took the form of a tiger and ate many of them.

23. He used to eat unhesitatingly never leaving even

a bone behind. Thus many brāhmaṇas were annihilated by him in this way.

24. Once on the Śivarātri[343] day a certain devotee performed the worship of Śiva, the lord of the gods and was engaged in meditation in his own hut.

25. The lord of Daityas Dundubhinirhrāda, proud of his strength, assumed the form of a tiger and wanted to seize him.

26. As the devotee was in meditation with a mind concentrated on Śiva and as he had fixed the Astramantra, the Daitya could not attack him.

27. Śiva, the omnipresent lord, knew his evil intention and decided to slay the Daitya.

28. While the Daitya in the form of the tiger was about to snatch the devotee, Śiva appeared before him. The three-eyed lord Śiva is very keen in intellect in saving the devotees, nay in protecting the universe.

29. On seeing Śiva coming out of the phallic image worshipped by the devotee, the Daitya in the form of a tiger increased in size like a big mountain.

30. The Dānava glanced with a contemptuous look at Śiva but the lord caught him and pressed him under his armpit.

31. The five-faced lord favourably disposd to his devotees hit the tiger on its head with his fist harder than thunderbolt.

32. By the blow of the fist and the pressure at the armpit the tiger groaned aloud in great distress filling heaven and earth with the sound and died.

33. Agitated in their minds by the loud sound the ascetics came there in the night itself following the track of the sound.

34. On seeing the lord there with the lord of the beasts in his armpit they bowed to him. They eulogised him with the words of "Victory, Victory."

343. Śivarātri or Śiva-caturdaśī is the fourteenth of the dark half of Māgha (January-February) on which a rigorous fast is observed during the day and night.

The brahmins said:—

35. We are saved, O, we are saved from this terrible obstacle. O lord, please bless us. O preceptor of the universe stay here alone.

36. O great lord, in this self-same form in the name of the lord of the tiger offer protection. Let this place remain sacred always.

37. Save us the dwellers in this holy centre from other mishaps too. O lord of Pārvatī, leaving the wicked ones offer fearlessness to your devotees.

Sanatkumāra said:—

38. On hearing the words of the devotees, the moon-crested lord who is favourably disposed to the devotees said affirmatively and told the devotees again.

Lord Śiva said:—

39. "If any one sees me here in this form with faith, I will undoubtedly remove his torments and mishaps.

40. After hearing this story of mine and after remembering my phallic image in the heart if a man enters the battlefield he will certainly win.

41. In the meantime the gods came there along with Indra shouting slogans of victory jubilantly."

42. After bowing to Śiva with love, the gods joined their palms in reverence, drooped their shoulders and eulogised lord Śiva who is favourably disposed to his devotees.

The gods said:—

43. O lord Śiva, lord of the gods, remover of the distress of your devotees, be victorious. We the gods have been saved by killing this demon.

44. O fond of devotees, you shall protect them always. O lord of the gods, wicked men shall be slain by you, O lord of all.

45. On hearing these words of the gods, lord Śiva became delighted. After saying 'yes' he merged into the phallic image.

46. The gods, thus surprised returned to their respec-

tive abodes and rejoiced. The brahmins too in great delight returned the way they came.

47-48. He who reads this sacred narrative about the origin of the lord of the tiger, hears, narrates or teaches this shall obtain all desires. After death he will attain salvation becoming free of all miseries.

49. This narrative is incomparable as it contains the nectar-like words of the divine sports of Śiva. It is conducive to the attainment of heaven, fame and longevity. It increases sons and grandsons.

50. It yields great devotion and bliss. It is auspicious and increases the pleasure of Śiva. It yields supreme know ledge. It is beautiful and removes all aberrations.

CHAPTER FIFTYNINE

(*Vidala and Utpala are slain*)

Sanatkumāra said:—

1. O Vyāsa, listen with pleasure to the story of the great lord how he killed through his beloved a Daitya whom he indicated by a sign.

2. Formerly there were two great Daityas—Vidala and Utpala. They were great heroes, puffed up by the boon from Brahmā that they could not be slain by a man.

3. O Brahmin, the gods had been defeated in the battle by the two Daityas who by the strength of their arms considered the people of the three worlds as insignificant as the blade of grass.

4. Defeated by them, the gods sought refuge in Brahmā. After bowing to him duly they submitted to him respectfully.

5-6. On hearing their account Brahmā said. "They will surely be slain by the goddess. Be bold. Remember Śiva and Pārvatī respectfully. Śiva is auspicious, benevolent favourably disposed to his devotees. The supreme god will bring about welfare ere long."

Sanatkumāra said:—

7. After saying this, Brahmā kept quiet remembering Śiva. The gods too returned to their respective abodes rejoicingly.

8. Then at the behest of Śiva, the celestial sage Nārada went to the abode of the Daityas and sang the glory of the beauty of Pārvatī.

9. On hearing his words the two Daityas were deluded by deception. Afflicted by the god of lust they desired to abduct the goddess.

10. They thought to themselves where and when they would obtain Pārvatī at the rise of their good fortune.

11-12. Once Śiva was engaged in sports. Pārvatī too was playing with a ball along with her friends in the presence of Śiva.

13. At times she looked up. At times she displayed the lightness of limbs. At times when she took deep breaths, bees hovered round her enticed by the fragrance. At times the bees made her eyes agitated.

14. Flowers from her tresses fell on the gronnd in front of her. Her cheeks were perspiring. Drops of sweat dripping from the paintings on her cheek brightened up.

15. The lustre of her body spread all round through the partings of her gown. By exerting her too much in beating the ball her red hand became redder than the red lotus.

16-17. When the ball bounced, her eyes too followed it making the brows to dance thereby. As the goddess mother of the universe was playing, she was seen by the Daityas who were going by the aerial path. They were, as it were, held in the lap by the imminent death.

18. They were the Daityas Vidala and Uptala who had become haughty by the boon of Brahmā and by the might of their arms thought the people of the three worlds as insignificant as the blades of grass.[344]

19. Desirous of abducting the goddess as they were tormented by the god of lust, they descended from the sky quickly after adapting the Śāmbarī magic skill.

344. This verse is the repetition of fragments of verses 2 and 3 of this chapter.

20. The two wicked ones of fickle mind approached Pārvatī in the guise of Śiva's attendants.

21. By the excessive tremulousness of their eyes they were in a trice recognized by Śiva, the chastiser of and contemptuous towards the wicked.

22. The lord shot a significant glance at Pārvatī the destroyer of miseries denoting that they were Daityas and not Gaṇas. They could assume any form.

23. O dear, she understood the sign of the eyes of her lord Śiva, the great lord who indulges in fancies.

24. Realising the significant glance, the goddess, the sharer of half the body of Śiva[345] hit both of them simultaneously with the ball.

25. The powerful wicked Daityas hit by the ball whirled and whirled and fell on the ground.

26-27. After making the two Daityas fall like two ripe fruits from the palmyra tree when shaken by the wind, or like the two peaks of a great mountain struck by the thunderbolt, as they had attempted to do an evil action, the ball changed itself into the phallic image.

28. That phallic image came to be known as Kandukeśvara. It is very near Jyeṣṭheśvara. It removes all the wicked things.

29. At the same time, knowing the manifestation of Śiva, Viṣṇu. Brahmā, other gods and the sages came there.

30. Then all the gods received boons from Śiva and at his bidding returned to their respective abodes delightedly. So were the residents of Kāśī blessed with the boons.

31. On seeing Śiva with Pārvatī they bowed to him with palms joined in reverence and eulogised him with devotion and pleasing words.

32. O Vyāsa, Śiva and Pārvatī too, went delightedly to their abode. The lord favourably disposed to his devotees, an expert in divine sports, had already had his game.

33. The Kandukeśvara phallic image at Kāśī destroys the wicked, yields worldly pleasures and salvation. Upon the good it bestows desires always.

345. In the Ardhanārīśvara form of Śiva, Pārvatī occupies one half and Śiva the other half. The form suggests the divine origin of men and women.

34. Where is the cause of fear to him who hears this incomparable narrative with joy, narrates or reads it?

35. He enjoys pleasures of various kinds and of excellent nature. Hereafter he attains the divine goal inaccessible even to the gods.

36. O dear, I have thus narrated to you the wonderful story of Śiva and Pārvatī. It indicates their favouritism to the devotees. It bestows welfare to the good.

Brahmā said:—

37. After narrating the story of the moon-crested lord, my excellent son, Sanatkumāra took leave of Vyāsa. Duly honoured by him he then went to Kāśī by the aerial path.

38. Thus the section called "Yuddha" has been narrated to you, O excellent sage. In the Compendium called Rudra, it bestows all cherished desires.

39. Thus the whole of Rudrasaṁhitā has been explained by me. It is pleasing to Śiva always. It yields enjoyment here and liberation hereafter.

40. The man who reads this Saṁhitā that wards off harassment from enemies shall attain all desires. Thereafter he shall attain liberation.

Sūta said:—

41. Thus Brahmā's son Nārada heard from his father the great glory of Śiva. Śatanāmā too was satisfied and became a follower of Śiva.

42. I have completely narrated the conversation between Brahmā and Nārada. Śiva is the most important of all deities. What else do you wish to hear about him?